3 1761 07836771 1

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
University of Toronto

http://www.archive.org/details/memorialeditiono05foxw

35
5367

MEMORIAL EDITION

OF

COLLECTED WORKS

OF

W. J. FOX.

VOL. V.

LETTERS ON THE CORN LAWS, BY "A NORWICH WEAVER-BOY;"

AND

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS BY "PUBLICOLA."

117705
24/7/11

LONDON:

CHARLES FOX, 67 PATERNOSTER ROW;

AND

TRÜBNER & Co., 60 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1866.

BX
9815
F7
v.5

LONDON:
LEVEY AND CO., PRINTERS, GREAT NEW STREET,
FETTER LANE, E.C.

LETTERS ON THE CORN LAWS,

PUBLISHED IN THE "LEAGUE" NEWSPAPER UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF "A NORWICH WEAVER-BOY;"

AND

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

PUBLISHED IN THE "WEEKLY DISPATCH" UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF "PUBLICOLA."

CONTENTS.

PAGE

1. LETTERS ON THE CORN LAWS, BY "A NORWICH WEAVER-BOY:"

I. To the Right Hon. Lord Ashley, M.P., &c.; October 5, 1844 1

II. To the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P., &c.; October 12, 1844 6

III. To the Duke of Richmond; October 19, 1844 . . . 12

IV. To the Right Hon. Earl Radnor; October 26, 1844 . . 17

V. To her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria; November 2, 1844 23

VI. To "Young England;" November 9, 1844. 28

VII. To the Bishops; November 16, 1844 33

VIII. To the Women of Great Britain; November 23, 1844 . 38

IX. To Sir E. L. Bulwer-Lytton, Bart.; November 30, 1844 . 42

X. To the Non-Electors of Great Britain; December 7, 1844 . 47

XI. To Messrs. E. Moses and Son; December 14, 1844 . . 51

XII. Reply to "Some of the Women of England;" December 21, 1844 55

XIII. To all true Leaguers; December 28, 1844 . . . 61

XIV. To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., M.P., First Lord of the Treasury, &c. &c.; January 4, 1845 . . . 65

XV. To Sir R. H. Inglis, Bart., M.P.; January 11, 1845 . . 69

XVI. To the Camlet-Weavers of Norwich; January 18, 1845 . 73

XVII. To one of the Five Hundred Labourers paraded lately at Stowe; January 25, 1845 78

XVIII. To the Marquis of Normanby; February 1, 1845 . . 82

XIX. To Thomas Baring, Esq., M.P., *not* for the City of London; February 8, 1845 87

XX. To the Duke of Richmond; the Marquis of Salisbury; the Earl of Essex; the Earl of March, M.P., Sussex West; Lord Beaumont; Mr. George Bankes, M.P., Dorsetshire; Mr. T. W. Bramston, M.P., Essex South; Mr. Darby, M.P., Sussex East; Mr. E. B. Denison, M.P.,

LETTERS ON THE CORN LAWS (*continued*): PAGE

Yorkshire, West Riding; Mr. Du Pré, M.P., Buckinghamshire; Mr. W. Miles, M.P., Somerset East; Mr. Newdegate, M.P., Warwickshire North; Mr. Stafford O'Brien, M.P., Northamptonshire North; Mr. Pusey, M.P., Berkshire; Col. Rushbrooke, M.P., Suffolk West; Sir John Trollope, Bart., M.P., Lincolnshire South; Sir John Tyrell, Bart., M.P., Essex North; Mr. Wodehouse, M.P., Norfolk East; Mr. J. J. Allnatt, Berkshire; Mr. H. G. Andrews, Somerset; Mr. R. Baker, Essex; Mr. W. Bennett, Beds; Mr. Brickwell, Bucks; Mr. Blandford, Somerset; Mr. Brown, North Wilts; Mr. Cramp, Kent; Mr. J. Clarke, Lincolnshire; Mr. J. Ellman, Sussex; Mr. Hilditch, Salop; Mr. Fisher Hobbs, Essex; Mr. Hudson, Norfolk; Mr. S. Jonas, Cambridgeshire; Mr. S. Mills, South Wilts; Mr. Moseley, East Suffolk; Mr. Oakley, Herts; Mr. Pain, Bedfordshire; Mr. Rodwell, West Suffolk; Mr G. Shackel, Berkshire; Mr. R. Smith, Rutland; Mr. Stevenson, Lincolnshire; Mr. Turner, Devon; Mr. Warsop, Huntingdon; Mr. Weall, Surrey; and Mr. Edward Wyatt, West Sussex; February 15, 1845 93

XXI. To George Lynes, Camlet-Weaver, Norwich; February 22, 1845 99

XXII. To Thomas Milner Gibson, Esq., M.P.; March 1, 1845 . 105

XXIII. To "the Untaxed Foreigner;" March 15, 1845 . . 110

XXIV. To the Right Hon. Lord Howick, M.P., &c.; March 22, 1845 114

XXV. To the Farmers of Devonshire; March 29, 1845 . . 119

XXVI. To the Rev. Dr. Lamb; April 5, 1845 123

XXVII. To John Houghton, Esq.; April 26, 1845 128

XXVIII. To the Frequenters of the Religious "May Meetings;" May 3, 1845 132

XXIX. To his Grace the Duke of Richmond (Second Letter); May 10, 1845 136

XXX. To the Hon. C. P. Villiers, M.P., &c.; May 17, 1845 . 141

XXXI. To Viscount Ingestre, M.P., &c.; May 24, 1845 . . 144

XXXII. To the Ladies who attended the Stalls in the Free-Trade Bazaar; May 31, 1845 148

XXXIII. To the Members of the House of Commons; June 7, 1845 152

XXXIV. To the Members of the House of Commons (Second Letter); June 14, 1845 156

XXXV. To the Electors of Exeter; July 5, 1845 160

XXXVI. To the Electors of Exeter (Second Letter); July 12, 1845 163

XXXVII. To the Electors of Sunderland; July 26, 1845 . . . 167

XXXVIII. To George Hudson, Esq.; August 2, 1845 . . . 170

XXXIX. To the Poor of Sunderland; August 9, 1845 . . . 174

LETTERS ON THE CORN LAWS (*continued*): PAGE

XL. To the "True Blues" of Maldon; August 16, 1845 . . 177
XLI. To New Electors; August 23, 1845 181
XLII. To the Hon. Sidney Herbert, M.P.; August 30, 1845 . 185
XLIII. To Sir Frederick Thesiger, M.P., Attorney-General, &c.; September 6, 1845 190
XLIV. To his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, E.M., &c. &c.; October 4, 1845 194
XLV. To Tenant-Farmers; October 11, 1845 198
XLVI. To the Right Hon. Lord Stanley; October 18, 1845 . . 202
XLVII. To the Right Hon. Lord Ashley; October 25, 1845 . . 206
XLVIII. To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., M.P., First Lord of the Treasury, &c.; November 1, 1845 . . . 211
XLIX. To the Duke of Richmond, President of the Agricultural Protection Society; November 8, 1845 . . . 214
L. To the People of England; November 22, 1845 . . 218
LI. To the Inhabitants of the Metropolis; November 29, 1845 221
LII. To E. S. Cayley, Esq., M.P.; December 6, 1845 . . 224
LIII. To the People of England; December 27, 1845 . . 230
LIV. To B. Hawes, Esq., M.P.; January 3, 1846 . . . 232
LV. To the People; January 10, 1846 236
LVI. To Richard Cobden, Esq., M.P.; February 7, 1846 . . 239
LVII. To John Bright, Esq., M.P.; February 28, 1846 . . 242
LVIII. To George Wilson, Esq. 244

2. EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS BY "PUBLICOLA:"

Capital Punishment; June 7, 1846 247
„ „ January 28, 1855 248
Death of the Archbishop of York; November 14, 1847 . . 249
Sir R. H. Inglis and Oxford; January 22, 1854 . . . 251
Education and the Franchise; January 29, 1854 . . . 255
The Crystal Palace and the Sunday Question; May 7, 1854 . 256
Dr. Jacob and Christ's Hospital; November 26, 1854 . . 257
The Churches Militant; December 3, 1854 259
Mr. D'Israeli; December 26, 1854 260
„ March 6, 1858 261
Church in the Army; January 21, 1855 262
The Day of Humiliation; March 18, 1855 263
A Thanksgiving Day; September 16, 1855 267
On American Indifference to the great European Struggle; September 23, 1855 269
Convict Prisons and their Clericals; September 30, 1855 . 271
Judaism and Moses; October 21, 1855 273
The Bible in Schools; November 25, 1855 274
Christmas Holidays; December 16, 1855 277
The Church and Freedom; December 30, 1855 . . . 279

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS BY "PUBLICOLA" (*continued*): PAGE

Sabbatarian Agitation (to the Rev. Joshua Kingsmill); February 10, 1856 280
Woman's Right to Property; February 24, 1856 . . . 283
" " " July 6, 1856 284
Church Discipline; April 27, 1856 285
Irish Education and the Church; June 22, 1856 . . . 286
Religion and Education; August 3, 1856 287
The Irish Church Question; September 21, 1856 . . . 290
Consecrated Ground; October 12, 1856 291
On Natural Education; April 5, 1857 293
Parliamentary Eloquence; May 3, 1857 298
A Call to the People; June 20, 1858 303
George Combe and Education; August 22, 1858 . . . 306
The Belief in Witchcraft; October 3, 1858 309
Education of Woman; October 17, 1858 314
The Bible Society; October 24, 1858 316
Church Monopoly; November 7, 1858 317
The Reformation; November 21, 1858 318
Working Men and Patronage; January 23, 1859 . . . 319
Daniel O'Connell; May 30, 1847 320

THE

COLLECTED WORKS OF W. J. FOX.

LETTERS ON THE CORN LAWS,

Published in the "League" Newspaper, under the Signature of "A Norwich Weaver-Boy." *

No. I.

To the Right Hon. Lord Ashley, M.P., &c.

October 5, 1844.

MY LORD,—You aspire to be regarded as the friend of the working people. It is one of the most respectable forms of ambition. Nor is its gratification difficult, so far as a large proportion of those who labour is concerned; their alleged suspiciousness of the higher classes is a very superficial feeling. A few symptoms of sympathy will win their hearts. They do not scrutinise severely. Much more is needful to deserve their confidence than to obtain it. At this higher mark I would have your lordship aim. I give you credit for a kindly and noble nature. The concession is too large, should you content yourself with the plaudits of that credulity which looks to "Young England" for leadership towards intellectual progress, and to Feargus O'Connor for guidance to political emancipation.

You advocate a Ten-Hours' Factory Bill, and you oppose the repeal of the Corn Laws. There are many with whom the advocacy gains you a popularity which the hostility does not, for the present, materially impair. Those who

* The first of the "Norwich Weaver-Boy" Letters appeared in the *League* newspaper for the 5th October 1844; the fifty-eighth, and last, appeared on the 27th June 1846, two days after the Bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws had passed the House of Lords.

feel are more numerous than those who think. It is easier to sigh over the sadness of prolonged labour, than to trace the operation of the causes by which labour is mercilessly prolonged in order to earn the means of subsistence. But this is required of the true friend of the working classes. Stopping short of this, as your lordship has hitherto stopped short, you may render yourself the idol of those who mistake soft heads for tender hearts, and be canonised as the patron saint of a sickly sentimentalism; but history will not award you the enduring honours of a genuine philanthropy.

Reconsider, my lord, the incongruous combination in your conduct to which I have just adverted. You are anxious to diminish labour, and yet to preserve undiminished a tax upon the food which that labour was undergone to earn. You introduce a bill which proclaims to the poor man, "Thou shalt not work so long;" other things remaining the same, your bill actually says, "Thou shalt not eat so much." The limitation of work can only fail of being the limitation of wages when coupled with other measures which unshackle trade, and leave food to its natural price in the world's market. Your Ten-Hours' Bill alone is but a one-sided benevolence,—benevolence with only its weak and blind side; it would have proved itself a bill of pains and penalties. I dispute not the sincerity of your humane professions; I address you now in the faith that you meant well; but "the road to hell is paved with good intentions," and the hovel of starvation and crime is a house of call by the way, erected by a blundering legislation.

Your Factory Bill is yet untried, and likely to remain so, unless advocated with a sterner disregard of party interests than you and your supporters evinced last session; but your act for regulating mines and collieries is in full operation. Mr. Tremenheere's report contains items on which, with reference to your adherence to monopolist principles, it is well that your attention should be fixed. In the main object you have—thank Heaven!—succeeded. Young children are no longer immured, through the live-long day, in dens of darkness. Dependent women are not now degraded into filthy beasts of burden. Blessings on you for that, and the honest heart will pour them forth unsparingly. The forced employment of the young and helpless, in ways beyond their strength or debasing to their

nature, is not Free Trade, but slave labour, and its abolition an occasion for universal satisfaction. But, my lord, even in this rejoicing, who pays the piper? The collier families were poor enough before, and very many of them are now poorer still. The female form was then debased by dirt; now it is attenuated by starvation. Again and again do we read in Mr. Tremenheere's report, of the expelled women "stealing" down into the pits for employment; and steal down they must, or be driven to steal above ground. Prosecutions are commenced, and more are threatened. Here is a new version of the law, "Thou shalt not steal." Such legal punishment as usually awaits the thief impends over those who have only sought to steal into the way of earning an honest livelihood. Does it not strike some misgivings into your mind, when the judicial terrors of our tribunals are invoked for the suppression of this novel criminality?

On "women of mature or advanced age," Mr. Tremenheere says, "the provisions of the Act have fallen with great severity" (p. 2). In truth, the provisions of the Act seem scarcely to have left them any other provisions. "In all parts of the coal districts where women had been employed, complaints were numerous of the hardships that the Act had occasioned to elder females,—widows, orphan daughters of mature age, families where there were no sons to aid a father who was old or ailing; and other similar cases" (p. 2). These poor creatures, my lord, were unluckily on the blind side of your benevolence. Their numbers are not few. In one parish—Newton, in Midlothian—the report mentions, that of 180 females excluded from the coal-pits only 49 had since obtained permanent employment. Some of these unquestionably are suffering greatly; having been reduced from a position in which they could feed and clothe themselves in comfort and decency, to the necessity of resorting to the most humiliating employments, such as collecting manure on the roads, &c. The minister of the parish mentioned two instances, which may be taken as representing the difficulties to which many of the same class must have been exposed:

"The daughters—of the ages of 49 and 40 respectively—of a father aged 75 have been left to shift for themselves; and have had recourse to making and vending camstone—a kind of white clay, used

for washing the earthen and stone floors of houses—since they cannot hope to be received as domestic servants, after having been for so long a period nothing better than beasts of burden. In this occupation—when the weather admits of their going abroad—they make on an average about threepence a day; and to do this they have sometimes to travel as far as Haddington, a distance of fourteen miles."

Think upon this, my lord, and remember that it is your doing. Remember also that, besides the privations inflicted directly upon those ejected from their former occupation, there is a large atmosphere of injury in the reduction of wages amongst those who are subjected to this sudden competition. This, too, my lord, is your doing. The good you achieve is tainted. The fountain of your beneficence "sends forth sweet waters and bitter;" very bitter indeed to many of the most helpless and most deserving in that class of which you claim to be the legislative friend and champion.

The accident of Mr. Tremenheere's report enables the public to see distinctly, in this instance, the evil which is inseparable from your mode of dealing partially and superficially with the miseries to which working people are liable. That evil will corrode all your efforts, so long as you avoid going to the bottom of the question, and probing the depths of the disease. Your application mitigates the eruption on the skin, while the vital organs are losing their functionary power. People work hard and long, and set their wives and children to work when they can, not from the cravings of a wicked cupidity, but from the drivings of an inexorable necessity. More work in proportion to their numbers, that is what is wanted; and more work can only be created by more trade. Your lordship upholds the system by which the trade of the country is restricted.

The association founded by your lordship, for the benefit of the poor seamstresses of the metropolis, boasts, by advertisement, of having mitigated their condition. Very good, so far. But I ask again, at whose expense? Is at that of the inmates of the workhouses, losing thus their hard-earned but welcomed little privileges of tea or snuff; or at that of the ragged wretch for whom a very cheap shirt was the only chance of not going shirtless,—why, then, assuredly the drawback upon the good done is not inconsiderable. There is a removal of the heavy burden from

some weak shoulders to other weak shoulders. The pressure passes from poverty to poverty, but not from poverty to wealth; it passes from industry to industry, but not from industry to monopoly. You change its distribution; and, so far as you change it for the better, I give you heartfelt praise. Inasmuch as in these changes you still leave it upon the poor and working classes, and allow no atom of it to touch the monopolist landowner, I praise you not. To keep women and children out of mines is well; to keep class-taxation out of the bread-basket is better. "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

Even during this comparatively cheap and prosperous season—prosperous because cheap—there is too little of food and of employment in the country for the wants of its working population. Of this pervading evil, the forms of suffering that elicit your lordship's sympathy are only different phases or modifications. With more food and more work, many of the mischiefs which you deprecate would of themselves disappear; others might be removed by judicious interposition; and injurious results—like those inflicted in the coal and mining districts — be altogether avoided by that rapid opening up of new sources of employment which Free Trade, by extending commerce, would not fail to realise. Compensation would thus be provided for the victims of your reforms. Had those victims belonged to a more powerful class in society, your lordship knows very well that "compensation" would have been the first word uttered in parliament on the introduction of your propositions, and have stood in the margin of the first clause of any bill that you expected to carry through the House. Parliamentary justice dreams not of compensating the poor and helpless. No; not when, as in the present case, the best and most appropriate compensation is a measure at once of simplest equity and of national policy. Whatever else may be said of the Corn Laws, it can scarcely be contended by any that they do not enhance the price of food and limit the extent of trade. Humanity is against them; humanity, which your lordship takes politically for your guiding star. By implication you acknowledge their mischievous character. In your various efforts—whether the mine or the factory be foremost in your view—it is with the results of the Corn Laws that you are

struggling. And how long can your head be satisfied with your heart for feeling strongly some of the miserable results of a cause which you leave not only unassailed, but prolonged for the further multiplication of wretchedness by your support? For shame, my lord! abandon your palliatives of petty wrongs, or wage your war with the monster mischief. Be not a pedlar in the small wares of partial charity, while you help to blockade the island against the admission of justice. Have some regard for your consistency and good name. The working classes are willing to be your grateful debtors for the most trifling improvement in their condition. But they know they are wronged. In their name I demand the impartial application of your principles of humanity. Abate the great source of evil in the cupidity of your own class, and its abuse of the sacred trust of legislative power. Become a Corn-Law repealer, or sink into a renegade to the philanthropy which has been the solitary and honourable distinction of your political career.

No. II.

To the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P., &c.

October 12, 1844.

My Lord,—A parliamentary leader has no vacations. For you this is no season of rest and relaxation. Although the night does not summon you to debate, and the day is free from official cares, yet have you that upon your mind which must frequently task severely your thoughts and faculties. The House of Commons is still sitting in your brain. The next session has already commenced in your imagination. You must observe intently the course of events. The position has to be marked out which the party will occupy with whose guidance you are intrusted. The campaign must be planned. And never, perhaps, had chieftain, political or military, greater reason than yourself, while his followers reposed or sported, for anxiety and watchfulness.

You are the leader of an old party in new circumstances. Much difficulty might not be presented by that fact to an intelligent politician, were the circumstances such as to bear the application of party principles. In the present case it is not so; and hence the difficulty of your deliberations and the importance of your decisions. Whig principles have nothing to do with political economy. They might as well be brought to the determination of a controversy in chemistry or geology. No common measure exists between what constitutes your party and what interests the public mind. The star by which that party has been steered belongs to a different hemisphere from the present horizon of public affairs. A Whig leader of Whigs, you contemplate a legislative campaign in which the only strife that the world cares for is between the cause of Free Trade and that of monopoly. This will never do, my lord.

The battles of Whig and Tory are matters of history; there is no fighting them over again. They have followed those of Greeks and Trojans, and of Guelfs and Ghibbelines, to the land of shadows. What single Whig question of any practical moment exists between you and Sir Robert Peel? By what test can you un-Whig Lord Stanley? The old party demarcation has dwindled to a geometrical line; it may retain historical length, but it has neither breadth nor thickness. You have shown yourself, and may again, an acute critic on the measures of the present government; you are not the opponent of its principles.

No imputation on your consistency is intended by this assertion. Few public men have more of that quality. Nor does that concession imply the inconsistency of those Whigs, and they are not a few, who swell the ranks of your opponents. Whiggism never affected to be anti-Conservative. Nor does Conservatism, as described on various public occasions by Sir Robert Peel himself, show any necessary antagonism to Whig principles. The practical differences are questions of degree, or questions foreign to the party distinction. That distinction represents nothing in the nation—absolutely nothing. It is a tradition—a conventionalism—the thin ghost of a departed reality.

Whiggism began to die out with the death of the Pretender, and the birth of popular democracy. The secessions from its ranks occasioned by the predilections of

George III.,—the outbreak of the French Revolution,—the second French war,—and the growth of Radicalism,—are the stages of its decomposition. Only the premature death of George Canning prevented the remains of the Whig party from being swamped in a Canning party. Catholic Emancipation, Parliamentary Reform, and Corn-Law modification have been successively caught at; but they were not properly Whig questions,—and at most they merely served to shed a flitting light over inevitable decay. Peace to the departed! You, my lord, are a living statesman, expected to do something for a living people. Come out from among the tombs; look abroad over fields and factories; ask what actually divides the nation, what it wants,—and how its stripes may be healed, its wrongs redressed, and its prosperity advanced! Throw off the trammels of defunct faction! That power is gone; why wear its collar or hoist its banner? Rise to the emergency of the times. It took Sir Robert Peel ten years to construct a party without a principle; you may create a party by a principle in a single session.

The country is divided by the disciples of the Free Trade and the monopolist systems. These would relieve distress and obtain wealth by unshackled commerce; those, by the agency of restrictive legislation. No other difference, whatever the topic to which it relates, touches people's thoughts and feelings with the force which this exercises. These are the antagonist principles of the public mind. Ought they not also to be the antagonist principles of the legislative body? Here is a real struggle; no field-day or sham-fight, exciting only scorn or suspicion. Here are watchwords sure of the response of millions. A statesman fitted for the times should boldly and frankly take his stand upon one or the other, and work it out into the appropriate legislative results. I need not put the supposition both ways; you have, I believe, read Adam Smith too well for that; and if so, you have also read your own destiny to combat in parliament for the new and glorious post of Free-Trade minister; or to sink into the last of the Whigs, the evanescent point which finishes the party's half-century of taperings towards impalpable tenuity.

The future Free-Trade minister! that will be something in the world, my lord, hereafter. There is not many a

nobler niche in history. None so noble that is waiting, vacant, and saying, "Come and fill me!" What is more to the purpose, it would be something now,—every thing to the existing generation. It is encouragement for the enterprising, bread for the hungry, and wages for the industrious. Even for the monopolist-landlord class in the legislature, it would surely be more welcome to confront avowed hostility than to live in the everlasting suspicion of treachery till such a divarication ensues. How many on both sides of the House must feel the hollowness of their seeming union with real foes! Both you and Sir Robert Peel are at the head of followers that trust neither you nor each other. The air is rife with insincerity. Men speak of comrades, and think of conspirators. It is time for this age of fallacies to pass. Let the members divide not on the frivolous, but the important; not on the nominal, but the real; not on the obsolete quarrels of extinct parties, but on the great questions of national policy.

All things are ripening for a new distribution of the contending forces in the legislature. Take the journals of this very day,—Wednesday, October 9. The organ of your own party confirms my assertion of the extent to which it now coincides in principle with the opposite political party. It wages war on the past, not on the present. The *Morning Chronicle* says: "It is not to the objects, but to the sinister and dishonourable course which has been pursued by the Tory party, that we object." Again, "In most cases governments are wrong, and oppositions right; but the Tory government is often right; whereas the Tory opposition was always wrong." It is only, then, to "let bygones be bygones." From the Whig journal I turn to that of the ministry, the *Morning Herald*. There I find the editor balancing between the hypothetical repeal of the two sets of taxes, and advancing towards his conclusion by the aid of such facts, principles, and objects as form the staple of many of the League speeches at Covent-Garden Theatre:

"The evils and inconveniences of the malt-tax are undeniable; but it affects agriculture only indirectly. It is paid by the consumers; and the consumers of ale and beer are, as a body, the least wealthy parts of the community; it is, therefore, raised mainly from the working classes. It is a tax on what is more than a luxury to

the poor man,—on what is, considering the staple of his sustenance, a necessary; it is, therefore, a tax which seriously diminishes the available value of his wages. But this is only its primary defect; by its severity it diminishes the consumption of beer, and, consequently, the production of barley. Now, whatever diminishes the production of barley must, in some degree, lessen the demand for labour; and whatever lessens the demand for labour, lowers wages. And thus, not only does the malt-tax diminish the available value of wages, but it also diminishes the demand for labour, and thereby lowers the rate of wages. The malt-tax is, then, clearly much more of a labourers' question than a farmers' or a landlords' question.

Still, it is equally undeniable that other indirect taxes have the same tendencies as the malt-tax; and it may be doubted whether there are not several that might be repealed or greatly reduced with more advantage to the working classes, and, at the same time, with less inconvenience to the revenue, than the malt-tax. The existing weight of taxation on tea, sugar, and coffee precludes those wholesome and nutritious articles of food from being staples of poor men's sustenance out of large towns, and forces them, where those articles are used, on inferior, adulterated, and frequently hurtful sorts. Beer is within the constant or general reach of the very poorest; but from the habitual use of tea, coffee, and sugar, a very large class of the working people are excluded, and that mainly by the amount of taxation imposed upon those commodities. Now, fully acknowledging the evils of the malt-tax, still the inducement to attempt to bring tea, sugar, and coffee into the habitual use of all the labouring classes is, we think, greater than the temptation to extend the consumption of beer, did even the finances of the country render the latter alternative possible. Of the wages farmers are able to pay their labourers, much too large a share goes to the revenue, and too small a proportion to their actual maintenance; and in no instance is this more the case than when the poor man ventures to purchase tea, coffee, and sugar."

No matter for the consistency or the immediate object of these lucubrations. They show how economical truth is diffusing itself through the political atmosphere. It is present, like the electrical fluid, in the air. The first leading statesman who shall adopt it for the spirit of his public policy will be a conductor to give it form and power.

Whig and ministerial, there is a journal which is neither—the journal which is at once the greatest of powers and the truest and most sonorous of echoes. I need not name the *Times*. Whether as power or as echo, its voice is an indication for public men to heed. The following passage from its leader of the same date as those just cited, is by no means the least worthy of being heeded:

"The 'condition-of-England' question, as it has been affectedly called, is fast becoming a question indeed. People are now be-

ginning to allow that it is a question. They confess that it is a question which must be attended to—that it is one which is growing and strengthening and deepening, and which cannot any longer be paltered with or avoided. It is true that they have been forced rather than persuaded to this admission. Wales and Suffolk have been in a blaze before it could be extorted. But we apprehend that it is coming at last. Men of all parties are beginning to see that the dry, mechanical, routine party principles of the last half-century are unable to cope with the altered circumstances and increasing and overpowering exigencies of this great empire. Something more, on the one hand, than mere conversation, and something else, on the other, than simple levelling or cold utilitarianism, is required to meet and remedy the great social evils under which we are labouring. This is a truth which is now beginning to spread."

And thus, my lord, do all the elements conspire and cry out for a new political combination, a new political demarcation. We want a warfare with the Richmond and Knatchbull monopoly, not with the Peel and Wellington ministry. The best portion of the ministry would be with such a movement in their hearts; they would continually own its influence in their measures; and would, not improbably, be driven by the monopolists at their back into decided and active coöperation. It is their natural position; and many of the arguments in this letter might have been addressed with as much propriety to Sir Robert Peel as to yourself; but that he is too much fettered by the possession of office to originate such a movement, while you are perfectly free to do so. Your only fetters are in party associations and old habits—cobwebs to a man of moral courage.

And what else, my lord, can you undertake that will be either glorious for yourself or useful for your country? You cannot refit the shattered hulk of the old Whig party again, and make it sea-worthy. You may turn Irish politics to some temporary account in parliamentary warfare; but Whiggism is pledged not less deeply than Toryism against repeal. You may play off the monopolist section of the ministerialists against the liberal section; but such manœuvring will gain little of power or credit. I would not see you sink into a trickster, and with such a grand career open to you and inviting you to its pursuit. Above all, it behoves you to avoid tampering with the Free-Trade question as an instrument of party purposes. You have already had one lesson on the vanity of that endeavour;

or, if not so, then on the peril of being suspected of such an endeavour. Your fixed duty was the demolition of the late administration. It will never serve to construct another Whig administration. You and your colleagues are the martyrs of the Free-Trade principle, without being, as yet, its confessors and champions. Your conduct has incurred the penalty without winning the prize. You bear the brand without wearing the laurel. Like the Windsor-Castle steamer, you made shipwreck upon the beacon. Look at the compass, and change your course.

To form a Free-Trade party in the House, courted and feared by both sides on all close-run questions, would not be difficult. All purposes of personal importance would be more answered thereby than by the broader course now recommended; and many subordinate benefits would, at intervals, be gained. But this is far below what the exigencies of the time demand. By almost universal consent, Free Trade or restriction is the turning-point of the policy by which the country must be governed. There needs but some leading statesman to say so, and the new arrangement of parties, representing—what is not represented now—the real division of opinions and interests in the community, will form itself around him. Genuine affinities and antipathies would displace the shadows that are still perversely treated as substances. The hour is come,—where is the man? Art thou he?

No. III.

To the Duke of Richmond.

October 19, 1844.

My Lord Duke,—In early life you won the reputation of a gallant soldier; in maturer years it has been your aim to sustain that of a high-minded nobleman. I appeal to your sense of honour, and invoke its judgment upon your conduct as a legislator.

It were a very superfluous and unpromising task to

argue the Corn Laws with your grace. An argument in political economy, affecting your own interests or prejudices, requires a patience of temper and a capacity of mind beyond what you are believed habitually to evince. Lord Radnor experimented in the House of Lords, during the last session, upon your logic and your urbanity. The results do not invite a repetition of the experiment. The assumption of your manner may be warranted by the superiority of your rank, or accounted for by your early training—you were bred under Wellington, and not under Chesterfield—but it certainly is not authorised by any other superiority. I confess your invulnerability to reasoning. Are you equally hardened to considerations that touch more nearly the soldier, the peer, and the gentleman? Are you willing to stand before the world as the foremost champion of a cause that is tainted with dishonour?

I bring this charge against monopolist laws as upheld by the privileged class to which you belong. I bring it against yourself; for you cannot, by mingling with a crowd, escape the impeachment. Nor does it avail that many may hold you unspotted in this matter. A question of honour is not decided by appeal to a majority. The result of a poll goes for nothing; it obliterates no blot upon an escutcheon,—look well to your own, my lord.

You are not only a legislator, but a trader,—not only a peer, but a merchant,—not only a duke, but a fishmonger. In the one capacity you make laws to sustain the artificial prices by which you profit in the other capacity. A similar abuse existed under the old Poor Law. The baker got himself elected a guardian, excluded other bakers from the supply of the workhouse, and put his own price upon the loaf. England is a great poor-house, you are one of the guardians, and deal in like manner with its bread. The petty nuisance you helped to put down sternly and contemptuously; the greater nuisance you both patronise and commit. The parish guardian might have been turned out; there you are safe from retribution. Opinion can only reach you through shame, not by dismissal.

National policy is put forward as the defence of the Corn Laws; thus making the profit of the landowner an incidental consequence of those laws, and not the purpose

mainly contemplated. For argument's sake, let this be granted. Taking it so, what would be the most decorous and natural conduct for persons in your situation, if actuated by a nice sense of honour? Plainly one of two courses: either to forego all such incidental advantages to their own revenues, and thus evince the sincerity of their support of the policy in question as a national policy; or else to leave the decision altogether to competent authorities and uninterested parties. Let the landowners do this, and where would the Corn Laws be on the morrow after the next meeting of parliament?

In this statement I forego the strength of the argument against monopoly; I leave untouched the flimsy sophistries of "independence upon foreign nations," and "peculiar burdens"—the hardihood of assertions, a thousand times disproved, is left unrebuked; I pass by the peril to our trade and commerce, the means of life to millions; I veil the sore privations and terrible sufferings, which make the humane shudder at such interference with the bounty of Heaven; I let your comprehension and your compassion slumber unmolested, and only knock at your heart's door to ask if Honour be at home, and where she slumbers while the peer legislates for the trader's emolument?

You have often, perhaps, been out on a foraging party, and the army to which you were attached is said not always to have been over particular even in a friendly country. But neither is the legislator the person, nor the House of Lords the place, nor the British nation the subject, for a foraging expedition. Plunder may be very fair in the soldier, and yet very foul in the lawmaker. And money transferred by a law for that purpose from one class to another, in the form of enhanced prices, is really plunder, gild it with whatever phrases you may. The law of the question cannot affect its morality; still less can it be a salve for the susceptibility of a gentleman.

Amid the romantic scenery in which you are now sojourning—where the mountains rise in awful majesty, and the torrent foams in picturesque fury—you linger perhaps by streams which have other beauties to your eye than those which charm the lover of nature or the wandering artist. To you they are less poetical than Pactolian. There you catch revenue and the means of splendour and im-

portance. The salmon are spawning, and they breed for your profit. The racers of Goodwood feed on the fish of the Ness. What say your tenants, your sub-fishers? Do they help you to curse Peel's tariff? At any rate, they listen respectfully. Salmon and tariff excite not there the titles which greeted them in the House of Lords, even from your brother monopolists who happened to be of less bilious temperament. Your fishery tenants will button their mouths as they button their pockets. The laugh is kept down, and so is the rent. But if, my lord duke, you cannot sink the fishmonger, remember that you have still a "protection" of 10*s*. a cwt. on your salmon. This is not so good to you as an absolute prohibition. You say it makes 2000*l*. a year difference; but think of what you still receive, and how you get it. The protective duty is as much as the salmon itself was formerly worth in the neighbourhood. You still protect the fish out of the mouths of the Scotch, and money out of the purses of the English. We cannot buy salmon without protection sauce. I have not the means of calculating how much you continue to gain annually, by law, in addition to the worth of your salmon; but, whatever the amount, the effect on the consumer is the same as if false weights were used at the fish-stall where he purchases. Scales ought to be equal, and so should laws. An act of parliament is a false weight in merchandise. Coronets and parchment are as foul as penny-pieces in the exchange of earnings for food. Fish-dealing is no stain on chivalry, in this commercial age, so long as it is fair dealing; but charging more for your fish, by the power of law-making, is less fragrant in the nostrils of honest and honourable men than the worst refuse of your agents' stalls.

This portion of the subject should make your grace question your conscience as to the Corn-Law protection. Fisheries are free from the mystification about farms. You cannot talk of the salmon being in the same boat with you, like the labourers. You make no boast of loving the spawn. Monopoly goes naked into the waters. And yet it is the same by sea or by land. You tell the occupiers and tillers of the soil that their protection shall not be diminished. Have the measures you support upheld the previous proportion between rents and prices? Your tenants are selling wheat at the same rate, or very nearly so, that they did

half a century ago. Meanwhile, are the rents of your estates the same? are they less than doubled? are they less than trebled? are there no instances in which they are even quadrupled? Is this fair play? Is this a simple and honest protection of the entire agricultural interest? You are pledged to the farmers to upset the present ministry, if they—the farmers—be not protected as heretofore. Look at the averages. Neither you nor Sir Robert Peel can obtain for them the prices you, by implication, promise. A higher power has interfered. By abundant crops Providence casts scorn upon your "protection." It is held up to contempt. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." But in the vanity of the attempt there is wickedness. It is a deceit on the class which is professedly patronised. Yes, my lord duke, it is deception; and that deception practised on a confiding and dependent class, who are condemned to loss and struggle, often to ruin, while the class which practises it alone reaps the advantage.

Although the manifesto of your Protection Society—the notorious tract of Mr. Cayley—is a topic of which the people may well be tired, yet you may be assured it will not be forgotten. That publication stands alone in literary history for barefaced falsification. I need not repeat evidence which has been fully before the public; but the proof is complete of such perversion and garbling of the pages of Adam Smith, for the purpose of making him seem the defender of tenets which he wrote to refute, as amounts not merely to a violation of literary etiquette, but of moral principle. And for this you are responsible. The falsehood is told for your behoof, under the shelter of your name, and with your subsequently avowed approval. O Monopoly, what a tyrant art thou!

> "'Mongst all your peers could none be found but Richmond
> To be the shameless herald of a lie?"

Lord John Manners told a public meeting lately that you presided at a dinner where labourers sat down at the same table with tenants and landlords. I have seen no report of this gracious reunion. But there is many a working man who would hold it no credit to associate voluntarily with any one implicated in deception such as is proved

upon that tract. It was an attempt at a direct fraud upon the public mind. Labouring men see through these things as well as their betters. When they adopt the monopolist principle, they work it out; and as they cannot make artificial scarcity by law, they try to do it by rick-burning, and very properly get transported for the same. And when they condemn that principle as unjust and dishonourable, their reprobation extends to all the ranks and forms in which it appears. They will not long, my lord duke, venerate your heraldic dignity if the bend sinister remain in your moral bearing.

No. IV.

To the Right Hon. Earl Radnor.

October 26, 1844.

My Lord,—In the leading article of the *Morning Chronicle* (Oct. 23), the following paragraph occurs, in reference, I presume, to your speech at the Highworth Anti-Corn-Law meeting:

"What would the fashionable journalist say, were we to prove that the narrow mercantile spirit which reaps where it has not sown has come to pervade the minds of the owners of land as much as those of the workers of cotton? At an agricultural meeting the other day, a poor man complained of the high rate at which allotments were let, and charged the landlord with taking too much. 'Why, if I took 5*l.* where I could get 8*l.*,' rejoined the landlord, 'I should be making a present of the difference.' There is not a more liberal man or landlord than the utterer of these words. And yet, what a maxim!"

That you had offended some other journalists had appeared previously, and was naturally to be expected. The shock given to the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* affords some occasion for surprise. Is it the Whig cue not to be quite out of sympathy with the current humbugs of the day? Does the party policy for next session include more coquetting with some of the little cliques constituting Sir Robert Peel's very composite majority? Are we to

have a continual war of parliamentary tactics and manœuvrings? If so, it is easy to understand why unmanageable men like your lordship, who take their decided course upon principle, should find that a Tory assistant will not lack a Whig bottle-holder. How long will it be before the organs and leaders of parties learn to construe the signs of the times, and ascertain—what is very plain to all beyond their limited circle—that nothing will ever again secure the weight of popular support but a defined national policy based on just and broad principles?

Instead of the expanded hands and upturned eyes which his exclamation suggests to the fancy, the writer of the paragraph might more appropriately have adverted to the truth or falsehood of the "maxim" which so affected him. It expresses, not a sentiment, but a matter of fact. There is no denying it. If it be a "narrow" truth, or an uncharitable truth, or a hard-hearted truth,—and something of this sort the exclamation seems to imply,—that is the fault of the truth, and not of the speaker. It is of little use to shake the head at naughty truths. They retain their reality just the same; and we must e'en do the best we can with them. Truths were not made to please the Whigs, any more than their opponents.

I am not about to volunteer any defence of your lordship—the records of a long and patriotic career place you above defence; but to thank you for the timely enunciation of a truth which has occasioned aspersions that you can well afford to disregard. You have characterised the allotment system, which is now the panacea of certain sentimental politicians; by a single stroke you have shown its true nature. It is a form of almsgiving. But no country was ever saved by almsgiving. No class was ever raised by almsgiving. No "bold peasantry" was ever created by almsgiving. And assuredly the prosperity of Great Britain will not be renovated or perpetuated by almsgiving.

It was as right as it was bold, my lord, to tell the labourers this; those of them, I mean, who were anxious to become landlords' bedesmen by allotments under the market price. The condition must ever be one of subservience and degradation. Such people would submit to be plundered, and thank the plunderers for a pittance back

in charity. Want and wretchedness have worn them down to this condition, devoid of the moral elements of independence. The true charity is to open a path back to the point from which they have fallen; not to make their physical necessities the agency of prolonging and deepening their mental abasement.

You were not neglectful of this better part, standing alone as you did amongst the aristocracy of the county, by your attendance at the Highworth meeting. A writer in the *Times* asks:

"Why does not the noble lord begin at the top and work downwards? Why does he not convene a public meeting of the great landowners, the clergy, and farmers of the county, for taking into consideration the best means of bettering the condition of the working classes? If the noble lord would do this, he would have the willing coöperation of men of all parties."

Would he? Then why did not the men of all parties present themselves at the Highworth meeting? Such were its objects. Farmers were there, and labourers, and small tradesmen. But you, my lord, were left to represent the landed aristocracy. The fairest play was given, and the utmost freedom of speech allowed. Why were not these charitable landlords and clergy there? Because it was not a packed meeting, to praise in set phrase some bit of delusion and cajolery, by which the working classes may still be kept in their false and oppressed position. In the last two resolutions of the meeting, the intelligence, spirit, and interests of the working people are pithily embodied. To contribute, as your lordship has done, towards cherishing in them such views as those resolutions express, is a service beyond all donations. It is worth more than lakes of soup and mountains of blankets.

"6. Resolved—That the working classes of this country have no desire to rely for support on gifts of charity or benevolence; that, as free men, they wish to support themselves by their own exertions and labour; that they have no doubt that, if human laws did not interfere, they would be able to do so; and that they therefore hope that all laws tending to curtail the supply of food, to diminish the sources of employment, and to press down the springs of industry, may speedily be abolished.

7. That all laws enacted for the purpose of raising the price of food and other commodities used by the people above their natural price in the great market of the world may be beneficial to certain classes, but must be injurious to the great mass of the people."

Can "the great landowners, the clergy, and the farmers of the county" suggest any thing better than that? If not, where is "their willing coöperation"? If they can, what is it?

Were allotments to become general, as some philanthropists anticipate, the result would be to make England another Ireland. Even the small scale on which they have been tried shows the tendency in that direction. The peasantry will compete for them, like the Irish, till a scanty meal of bad potatoes is all that remains for their own portion; like them, perhaps, compete till they have to work elsewhere or beg to make up the rent. Lord John Manners professes to expect, through allotments, the revival of the class of small farmers,—an intermediate grade between the farmer and the labourer. He has not explained how. Small farms cannot exist at allotment rents. And certainly the tendency, at present rents, is not to subdivide large farms. No, the labourer will be a labourer still. And what will his quarter of an acre of ground—half an acre appears practically to be the maximum—avail him in the long run? The farmer will remember it in his wages. It takes nobody out of the labour market. There is no step towards independence. For the gainers, one must look partly to the poorhouse and chiefly to the landlord. Instead of 20*s.* an acre, he gets 5*l.* or 8*l.* If the small holdings be troublesome to his steward, middlemen will soon come in, and the Irish system will be complete. Such are the remedial measures of those who refuse to untax the people's food, and to allow free scope to their industry!

The *Times'* critic on this meeting—although his own proposition is only for another meeting for "consideration"—objects that it offered nothing to the poor but "discussion." Why "consideration" should feed the hungry, or employ the idle, better than "discussion," he does not explain. But he is very angry with discussion. He deems you very stony-hearted for meeting the labourers for discussion. The real offence apparently is, that the labourers were treated as rational beings, and that the Corn Laws were the topic of this offensive discussion. Attend, my lord, to his rebuke:

"Sir,—Our able-bodied, honest, and industrious labourers do not

want discussion,—their appetites do not lie in that direction. With an empty stomach, they would willingly forego the pain of talking for the pleasure of eating. What they do want is constant employment, better diet and clothing, and to be protected from extortion. It matters little to a person in the last stage of a protracted disease whether his complaint does or does not proceed from a certain cause, and about which perhaps even his medical advisers themselves are not exactly agreed; neither would he care to be dragged from the privacy of his chamber to meet a consultation of doctors on his case at a public assembly. He, poor man, knows little, and cares less, for cause or effect. He wants no discussion; all he wants is present relief from his sufferings; and if his friends cannot give him that, they had better keep their discussions to themselves. Our labourers are reduced to the extremest verge of destitution: the unemployed are calling aloud for employment, the employed are asking adequate remuneration for their labour, their wives and children crying for bread; and the noble lord and his coadjutors give them—what? not a stone, it is true, but a discussion on the Corn Laws!"

This is a fearful description, nor is it in the least exaggerated. But what a wicked trifling with wretchedness it is, to suggest that such landlords as like should let off some twenty acres of ground, in little patches of quarter-acres, at the rate of 20*s.* or 30*s.* each, or at any rate whatever! What would that do for the great suffering class, towards "constant employment, better diet and clothing," and protection from extortion? Would the allotment keep a single family out of the poorhouse? For health, convenience, and amusement, every cottage should have its garden; but the critic speaks of a whole body of men, with their wives and families, crying out for work and bread. True, a discussion on the Corn Laws will not feed, clothe, and employ them; but to infer that the repeal of the Corn Laws would do nothing of the sort is by no means sound logic. If Free Trade, *i.e.* more trade, cannot help the insufficiency of employment, then Heaven have mercy on the sufferers! Certainly it promises fairer than charitable allotments.

The plan which, as a proposed remedy for a national evil, deserves to be branded for a cold-blooded hoax upon the peasantry and the community—an operation which your lordship has well performed—may yet undoubtedly have its limited worth in particular localities. And to that extent it would be likely to realise itself, were labour dealt with fairly, restored to its rights, and enhanced in worth by the increased demands of extending commerce. Land would be obtainable by the peasantry who could pay for it. They might

treat for as much as they wanted or desired. There would be a bargain and not a boon. The feeling of independence would be strengthened, instead of quashed. And to whatever extent the convenience and interest of different parties might be promoted by small holdings, for spade or garden cultivation, to that extent would the system be carried. It would take its natural position in the arrangements of society. Should it realise all the good that Young England predicts, Old England would greatly rejoice in the fulfilment of the prophecy. But to this benignant influence the previous condition of putting labour on a just and sound footing is essential. Insufficiency of work and wages can never be "cured by an allotment."

Your practice, my lord, to the labourer, betters Young England's preachments. You do not promise him patronage, but you cherish his aspirations for independence. You do not teach him to worship a queen-bee, but you back his claim to his own hive and honey. You do not catch his ball, but you listen to his grievances. Instead of bowling him out, you refute his prejudices. You meet him, not in his sports, as a lord, with little skill at cricket, but in his deliberations, as a man of ability and information. Yours is the higher compliment and the greater service. It is the shorter and surer road towards the restoration of confidence between the different classes of society. So will it be felt by the people. If discussions will not feed them, neither will flummery and cricket-matches. But discussions will show the way to employment and food, and so towards honest independence; while charity and games, leaving wrongs unredressed and the causes of wretchedness untouched, can only keep them sots, slaves, and beggars.

No. V.

To her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria.

November 2, 1844.

Madam,—The ceremonial which engaged your Majesty on Monday last probably occasioned some fatigue, and perhaps afforded some amusement. It will be happy for your people should reflections have been suggested of a more enduring character than either fatigue or amusement. The opening of the new Royal Exchange will be an item in the chronological tablet of your Majesty's reign. May it be a type of the future policy by which that reign will be characterised!

The splendid and enduring structure with which the name of Queen Victoria will be indissolubly associated, is a monument of civic wealth and progress. Its superiority to previous buildings on the same site, and devoted to the same purposes, is even less, far less, in proportion, than the present importance of the city as compared with the London of Elizabeth and of Charles II. Since their days a family of cities has grown up around the ancient metropolis. Miles of rural suburbs have been thickly planted with human dwellings. Of late, too, the remotest towns and districts have been brought comparatively near by the miraculous locomotive. The heart of the kingdom makes its pulsations felt at the extremities with unprecedented rapidity, and the impulse returns upon itself with augmented force. No such temple of trade and commerce has ever yet been erected in the world as that of which you have graced the inauguration by your presence. The reign of your Majesty is over the first of commercial countries.

Not unnatural is the desire that this fact should be strongly impressed upon the royal mind. Commerce is not merely one out of many splendid phenomena presented by your empire; it is much more than that,—it is the character of the nation. We are a commercial people. Our position in the map of the world marks out our destiny. The tendencies of the population are in harmony with their locality. Our land is limited, but our coast is long, and our industry untiring. To commerce we owe it that we are a people at all. Our independence and your crown are

amongst its bestowments. Fleets and armies have been created by the wealth of its productions. Without the sinews of strength which it nourished, Nelsons and Wellingtons must have remained unlaurelled. Assailed from without, and exhausted by burdens at home, but for the vivifying energies of commerce, Britain would have become the appendage of some great continental power. From the same source as our national wealth and safety has flowed the greatness of the landed aristocracy. The proudest nobles of your court owe to it the augmented worth of their broad lands. They are pensioners upon commerce for the largest portion of their revenues. It is not an accident, but the essence of our national being. It is not a limb which may be amputated, but the breath of life which preserves the body of the state from corruption and dissolution.

Why represent this fact to your Majesty? Because appearances do not force it on your notice, and because you are surrounded with advisers who are unlikely to commend it to your attention. The portentous anomaly may thus be hidden from your eyes, that we are a commercial people under the legislative government of a landed aristocracy. The laws which bind all classes are framed by one class, and that one bears a different character from the rest of the nation. We are a commercial people, with laws that impede, perplex, and restrain commerce. Trade, that feeds the millions and indirectly aggrandises the landed proprietary, is limited by laws under the mistaken notion of enhancing the worth of land. The policy of legislation, so far as the Corn Laws are concerned, is anti-national, for it is anti-commercial. While this contrariety endures there can be no security for the glory of a sovereign or the happiness of a people. One of the plainest lessons and most solemn warnings of history is the fatality of not consulting the genius of a community in its legislation. The spirit of the laws and that of the nation must be in unison; their discrepancy is dangerous, and their antagonism is destructive.

Amid the splendours of your Majesty's reception, and the countless thousands of welcoming faces that lined the streets from the Palace to the Exchange, no symptom presented itself of the mischiefs and miseries induced by this discrepancy. It was not the fitting occasion. Yet only

about three years have elapsed since the City of London invited into its representation a falling minister, simply because, in his falling, he had caught at the popularity of a relaxation of the laws restricting commerce, thereby breaking—for it was past averting—the disgrace of the descent. And only one year ago, this same City of London passed sentence of condemnation upon monopolist laws, by returning a candidate who avowedly and distinctly stood forth as the champion of Free Trade, the advocate of the principles of the Anti-Corn-Law League. These facts are significant. They indicate the pressure and the perception of a practical grievance. Of the extent of that grievance little can be known within the walls of a palace. The shadow of it sometimes passes over the speeches prepared for your Majesty to read to your Parliament when they assemble or are prorogued. There, on some occasions, you find the terms "Manufacturing Distress," and on other occasions "Agricultural Distress;" terms designating the alternate phases of suffering which now is spreading dismay, insolvency, desperation, and crime amongst the humbler sort of those who cultivate the soil; and which but lately reduced the industrious inhabitants of many towns, by scores of thousands, to actual starvation. The wretchedness is shifted from class to class, by fluctuations in the price of food, and sometimes mitigated for a season by an extraordinarily abundant harvest; but there it is, and there it will be, so long as a commercial people is governed by an anti-commercial policy. Even the beast of burden will chafe and fret and bleed if harnessed with a yoke unfitted to his form; and though his generous or enduring nature may accomplish much in spite of all impediments, that is but a poor alleviation of the suffering or apology for the cruelty.

It is unnecessary to tell your Majesty that no consent of the two Houses of Parliament exonerates your royal mind from the obligation of considering what form or principle of policy might best subserve the interests of this great empire. Suppose the representation of the Commons to be as real and faithful as all the world knows it to be otherwise; suppose the Peers of the realm to be entirely in sympathy with the peasantry and operatives; and the majority of the nation to be as much in favour of taxation upon food, and all other kinds of monopoly, as their legislators;—the

question would still remain whether monopoly be a wise and righteous policy. This infatuated accordance is supposable; and yet the path it chooses may be a road to ruin, with injustice in its course, disgrace and confusion at its close. The most enlightened sovereign may not be able to save a people against their will; but it is something to have a sovereign not participating in a ruinous popular delusion.

There are surer tests of the truthfulness of parliament to its trust than those which elections afford, so long as the electoral machinery gives undue preponderance to a class which believes itself interested in monopoly. It may be tried by miscellaneous assemblages of the people. Throughout the length and breadth of the island no large meeting can be fairly convened which agrees with parliament in its support of monopoly. It may be tried by our politico-economical literature, whether standard or popular. From Adam Smith to Ricardo—from the metaphysical formula of Mill to the narrative illustrations of Martineau—the voice of our authors has a nearer approach to unanimity in the condemnation of monopoly than can be found in any other topic whatsoever. Whether guidance to sound policy be sought in the voice of the interested many or in that of the enlightened few, still the result is, that on Free-Trade principles should the government of the British empire be conducted.

Your Majesty is not the puppet of a party, or merely the central figure in a ceremony. You have shown yourself aware of your prerogatives and your responsibility. On one memorable occasion you replaced a ministry that had resigned, and baffled such a parliamentary movement towards change as is usually deemed irresistible. In 1839 the nobility of your spirit rebuked the crooked approaches of Sir Robert Peel, and refused to give the world the false assurance, by the household appointments, of a confidence you did not feel. Your Majesty alone decided the postponement, for more than two years, of the restoration to power of the Tory party. The factious abuse which followed may be forgiven and forgotten by your Majesty; by many it will be for ever indignantly remembered. The spirit then evinced may hereafter serve your people more permanently and more efficiently. You scorned an acted untruth; and what is a worse falsehood than oppression?

What more untrue than monopoly to your crown and dignity, and to your people's rights and prosperity? The fervent loyalty of Englishmen, now so concentred on yourself, arose and attained its energy in times when the sovereign and the nation made common cause against a feudal oligarchy. The alliance is natural; for by the same class have both suffered, and the restrictors of public industry have also been the usurpers of regal authority. The last parliamentary act of the great Elizabeth was an abrogation of monopolies, with a pathetic apology for having been misled into the sacrifice to "a private profit" of what was "good and beneficial to the subjects in general." The confession was worthy of that majestic woman, whose example you have this week followed in visiting the City of London, to give splendour and royal name to the edifice "where merchants most do congregate." Times are coming when the importance may be incalculable of knowing that the sovereign is neither uninformed, indifferent, nor hostile to those commercial principles which are the life-blood of the nation. From a parliament elected both in delusion and corruption, and from ministers who compromise truths which they cannot deny to the demands of a class which holds them for its tools, the people will look wistfully towards the throne. They will call to mind the words of your reply to the address on Monday—words which, if prepared as a formality, were rendered living by your enunciation; words with which the citizens of London are adorning their dwellings in letters of gold, as a blessed omen of the future:

"The relief of the indigent, the advancement of science, the extension of commerce, were the objects contemplated by the founder of the Exchange.

These objects are near my heart. Their attainment will, I trust, be recorded among the peaceful triumphs of my reign; and I shall rejoice if I am thus enabled, by the blessing of Divine Providence, to promote the prosperity and happiness of all classes of my subjects."

They will look for your favouring sympathy in the arduous though peaceful struggles by which alone such "triumphs" can be realised, and in which they embark, knowing that "the relief of the indigent, the advancement of science, and the extension of commerce" are only to be achieved through the repeal of the Corn Law, with its kindred monopolies, and the harmony of legislation and institutions with

the free and commercial spirit of the nation. Such, may it please your Majesty, are the thoughts and desires of millions, to which I have endeavoured to give respectful and loyal expression.

No. VI.

To "Young England."

November 9, 1844.

GENTLEMEN,—I address you by the name to which you answer, and because you answer to it. The application is not made "in derision;" neither is it intended to recognise the probability of your becoming the social renovators of Old England. There is much to be done before you present a clear title to a destiny so honourable. But censure on the aspiration may well be spared if it stimulate you to active and worthy service in ameliorating the condition of the people. The present is not the time for such service to be acknowledged grudgingly; nor is it a time, either, for looking quietly on while exertions that might contribute materially to the public good are made in a wrong direction, and robbed thereby of their full measure of efficiency.

You profess a strong perception of the degradation of the working classes. "Not a man present," said Mr. Disraeli, at the Bingley meeting, "would have the audacity to quote a verse once met with in every body's mouth—

'A bold peasantry, our country's pride.'"

Your acknowledgment of existing evils is comprehensive. It includes the physical, intellectual, moral, and social condition of the poorest and most numerous classes. And you profess not only to see, but to feel; not only to feel, but to act. You come to meetings of the people for literary and scientific purposes; you eloquently assert the alliance of Commerce with Intelligence, and the property of the landless in the great "seed-field of time." You cherish a taste for wholesome sports and recreations, not only by oratorical approval, but even by personal participation. On allotments

of garden-ground, whether for the farm-labourer or the cotton-spinner, you pronounce glowing eulogies. The course you pursue has the charm of novelty, at least in the spirit in which you pursue it. Where others of your station have plainly shown that they were only keeping an inevitable engagement,—drudging through a needful form, or purchasing some portion of popularity against the next election, —you have evinced the earnestness and ardour of men fulfilling a mission. The most distinct statement of your purposes I take to be that expressed in the words of Mr. Disraeli at the Bingley meeting: "We believe that it is not so much to the action of laws as to the influence of manners that we must look for an efficient means to ameliorate the social condition of this country." This belief is the soul of your proceedings. It is the source, also, of the incongruities with which you are chargeable. Hence you look graciously on cricket-clubs and askance on the Anti-Corn-Law League. Hence you encourage the peasant to grow a peck of barley, and vote against admitting to a free port the ship that brings a cargo of wheat. Hence you patronise Athenæum tea-parties, and support the sugar monopoly. You tell the people to mend their manners; and you warn them not to tell you to mend their laws. You see the dependence of the social condition upon the physical, but shut your eyes to the dependence of the physical upon the economical. You anticipate much from the affability of noblemen and the liberality of landlords, nothing from the justice of parliament and the wisdom of legislation. This is beginning at the wrong end, and curiously carving the capital of the pillar, with no care to lay the foundation or build the pedestal.

Mechanics' institutions are supported in proportion as mechanics are prosperous. Well-enjoyed play presupposes well-paid work. The means of subsistence are the soul of sport. Labourers on low wages never aspire to the luxury of libraries. Athenæums arise when factories flourish; and increasing trade is alike favourable to the culture of the soil and the culture of the mind. Manchester listens delightedly to Young England's lectures, because cheap food gives Manchester both work and leisure. Advancing wages are the guano by which manufacturing towns are manured for the growth of taste and the harvest of intelligence. How

would Coningsby have been heard at Paisley in 1841? It is worse than preaching to the winds to tell starving weavers of manly sports and intellectual recreations. The comparative prosperity of the day makes your admonitions appropriate and yourselves popular. You must sustain that prosperity to sustain your own position. That is not to be done by speeches, nor by libraries, nor by walks in parks, nor by free cricket-grounds, though the son of a duke guard the wicket or discharge the ball. The working classes will enjoy your rhetoric only as a dessert after dinner. They have no relish for it fasting. You do them a world of good; but they would not hear you if they were hungry. Should storms lay next year's crop, they will beat down Young England also. In manufacturing districts, your popularity and usefulness are marked on the sliding scale. It may be calculated beforehand by the amount of duty upon corn. As wheat falls, you rise; and should that come to famine price, you sink to nothing.

Little need be said, therefore, of your attempting to act directly upon the manners of the working classes. That it does good in the more fortunate localities, as things are, is thankfully acknowledged, and with no stinted praise. You offer both stimulus and guidance; and they are eagerly received by those whose favouring circumstances allow them time and heart to think of parks and gardens, books and casts, lectures and *soirées*. You present yourselves gracefully and frankly amongst them: they at least reciprocate the frankness, and are not unconscious of the grace. But you are alone in the work. You have not drawn down aristocracy from its skies to dwell among men of the working class. A general action upon manners would imply a general coöperation from that section of society. Your movement only shows that it is unmoving. Aristocracy has too much confined its intercourse with the people to the debaucheries of electioneering clubs, or the blackguardism of the fancy and the turf. It has chiefly been familiar with the veriest scum of the people. But if the manners of the people are to be refined by aristocratical intercourse, there are two parties for you to act upon, and you have not yet experimented upon the most difficult. The question is not whether the many would receive the few, but whether the few will come to be received. When lords intermingle

socially with mechanics, no doubt the mechanics will mend their manners. "When the sky falls, we shall catch larks." How long will it take you to bring down the sky? The enterprise is unpromising. And were we to suppose the miracle accomplished, and such a change as it usually requires generations to effect, compressed into years instead of generations, still the question remains, whether the refinement of the working classes must not be mainly their own work. The rough stones on the beach rub themselves into smoothness by their ceaseless and equal collision much more efficiently than you can do it by throwing amongst them handfuls of the most exquisitely polished pebbles.

The only economical measure you have as yet recommended is that of allotments. To become general it must be made compulsory; and there is an end of your relying on "the influence of manners" in preference to "the action of the law." As a partial charity, it can never elevate the labouring class. It generates no sense of independence: it is superfluous when wages are high, and inadequate when work is not to be had. In many districts, as already in Sussex, it will become a substitute for wages, and the occasion of their reduction. It will be only a better sort of out-door relief. It cannot be expected so to prevail as to render the produce of the country equal to its consumption, and thus keep the price of food moderate and steady, and the manufacturing districts secure from the disastrous reverses to which they are subject from the want of a Free-Trade policy. If it could, the landowners' objection to Free Trade would be destroyed; and whatever of good there is in it, whatever of real subserviency to the interests of tenants and landlords, would be sure to realise itself, were a Free-Trade policy adopted.

You can, at best, make nothing more of allotments than a help and an enjoyment. The effect is both limited and questionable. The manufacturing towns must continue to be the drain and outlet of an increasing surplus population in the agricultural districts. But the expedient of allotments, as an alleviation of distress amongst the agricultural labourers, is a confession that the outlet is, even now, not wide enough. Even in these cheap times, that most extraordinary of human necessities, the want of work, is rife in the land. Law, not nature, has produced that

monstrous want; and by law must it be removed. Let dear times come again—two bad harvests in succession; and where then will the agricultural population be? where then the manufacturing? How will "the influence of manners" stand the storm that will then thunder in the towns, and blaze through the country? Your athenæums and museums and amenities will be swept away as by a whirlwind. The convulsions of an earthquake will rock Young England's cradle, and its last sleep be ushered in by the lullaby of a "rebel drum."

The good effect of high wages upon the manners and morals of the operative is destroyed by his only obtaining them occasionally. Vicissitude ruins his character; prosperity plunges him into excess, and adversity makes him a bold beggar. His life is the alternation of drink and destitution. The fact is alike notorious and deplorable. Here and there one of this victimised class may be converted by your speeches, and lay by, of his surplus, against the time of need; but you must be the most sanguine of missionaries if, by such means, you expect the conversion of whole bodies. Habits are changed by events, not by words. Steady wages and steady prices make steady workmen. How get them? You have not told us; it should have been the first point of your orations, but you were silent on it; it should have been the preface of your historical fancies, but you have left it unwritten.

If the libraries you patronise contain standard works of political economy, the intelligent operatives will seek it there. They will find, distinctly traced by able hands, the laws which govern the creation and distribution of wealth, with almost as much exactitude as the laws which rule in mechanical action and chemical combination. They will learn that all industrial interests are identical; and all dependent upon freedom of trade for their prosperity.

They will perceive that writers who have been sneered at for "cold" calculations were warm assertors of the rights of labour, and diligent investigators of the means for securing those rights. In all the great masters of the science, from Adam Smith downwards, they will find a continuous protest against commercial restriction. They will then not fail to observe that the political economy of law is in complete hostility to the political economy of science.

Its first principles are violated, and in conformity with the supposed interests of the majority of law-makers. The doctrines it disapproves are practically adopted, and those it demonstrates are held in abeyance. And they will then ask of you, gentlemen, why you side with the false political economy against the true; with the conclusions of avowed ignorance against those of admitted knowledge; with Richmond against Ricardo, and with Philip Miles against James Mill? They will demand why you are parties to a robbery upon their wages, in the form of enhanced price by taxation—a taxation imposed, not for the advantage of the national revenue, but for that of a "protected" class; why you uphold a system which has reduced their consumption of sugar, and often drives them from bread to potatoes; why you speak in favour of institutions and recreations that imply the sufficiency and steadiness of their employment, for them to be in a state to continue either contributors or recipients, and yet vote for laws, or against the repeal of laws, by which trade is limited in its extent, and rendered irregular in its operations. All this and more they will ask you, gentlemen; and "what the devil will you say?" Bethink yourselves of the matter, I pray you, before parliament assembles, and Mr. C. Villiers brings on his annual motion for Corn-Law Repeal.

No. VII.

To the Bishops.

November 16, 1844.

Right Rev. Prelates,—There is a delusion abroad, derogatory to the glory of Divine Providence, and mischievous in its influence upon Christian morals. The Author of those laws by which material agency is exerted, and voluntary conduct directed, has also constituted laws for the regulation of those industrial efforts by which the wealth of nations is produced, and for the reward of such efforts by its appropriate distribution. The knowledge of these laws is the science of political economy. Like all other sciences, it

has its worth in a system of natural theology. Like all other sciences, which are in fact only interpretations of the will and ways of creative power, it has its propitious bearing upon rectitude and beneficence of character. Yet there are many who treat it scornfully or scoffingly; and vilify its influences, without regard to its being taught correctly or incorrectly, as tending to cold-heartedness, and destructive of the kindly charities of life. For clergymen to do this, and to abet it in others, is surely an unseemly act, though not an uncommon one. I pray you look to it, for the credit of the Church, and for the sake of truth and usefulness.

In the intercourse of merchants, the exportation and importation of commodities, the adjustment of the capitalist's profits and the operative's wages, the effects of allowed facilities of exchange or of interposed difficulties, nothing happens by chance, any more than in the rising and setting of the sun, and the fulfilment of her courses by the moon. The phenomena of trade and labour are as much under law, Divine law, as the phenomena of the seasons. Ought we not to aim at understanding those laws? Does not the fact of our being placed by Providence in a great commercial country render it a duty? If they have been erroneously interpreted, whether by Adam Smith or by any other received authority, let the error be corrected, but not the knowledge depreciated. No human error can make vicious the effort to trace His footsteps "whose paths drop fatness." Whether the pursuit of wealth be sinful, either in itself or beyond certain limitations, is a different question. The philosophy of light is not less valuable because some may gaze on the sun till they are blind. To know how wealth is produced and distributed, no more makes the miser than the spendthrift. I shall endeavour to show your lordships that it tends to render the Christian yet more devout, and the philanthropist yet more beneficent.

You take your texts from David, and bid your hearers consider the starry heavens. The difference of the stars in glory is not greater than the diversity of earth's regions in fertility. The mutual relation pervading this difference is more apparent in the produce at our feet than in the sky above us. Some lands are rich in fruits, and some in minerals. One region contributes the cotton or the silk,

and another the skill and toil that fashions them for purposes of clothing or adornment. The spice-trees and the bread corn are parted by oceans. Materials for the humble dish on the peasant's table are brought from the ends of the earth. The distribution of the means of subsistence and enjoyment is not the work of chance. The stimulating effect of their interchange upon intellect, industry, and civilisation is not the work of chance. Plan and purpose are every where visible. Material nature points to unrestricted commerce as its result; as the distributer of the surplus which it pours forth in one place; the corrector of the sterility which it has marked on another region; and the equaliser, in proportion to man's industry, of Heaven's gifts to all that dwell on the face of the earth.

And is this lesson of piety not to be observed because certain petty and sordid interests obstruct the freedom of interchange, and bid the profusion rot in one region that deficient supply may enhance prices in another region? Must Heaven's laws be scorned theoretically because they are violated practically? Must a chapter be torn from the proof of Divine wisdom and goodness, because it contradicts a black leaf in the statute-book? Philosophy has often been called the handmaid of divinity: is divinity only the dumb bond-slave of monopoly?

In old and limited countries the population tends to increase faster than the means of subsistence; and its redundancy is checked by war, vice, and misery. That doctrine, my lords, was put in proof by a clergyman. The unbeliever forthwith pointed out that here was a plan for the production of evil attributed to Providence. What is the reply? That with Free Trade the limitation of soil and the increase of population no longer signify. The multitudes of manufacturing countries have their fertile fields across the Atlantic. Earth and ocean must be exhausted before mankind are redundant, or the horrible corrections of war, vice, and misery are necessarily applied. People may inhabit wherever they are born, or like best, or find most scope for their industry. The world is theirs. "Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip." The objection vanishes, unless monopoly be in the laws of nature or of morals. To that reply must we come; or leave the pages of our Bibles blotted. Only Free Trade overturns the altars

of the demon triad of war, vice, and misery. Priests of the gospel of peace and goodness, have you no concern in this?

That we should "buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," is undoubtedly the maxim of political economy. It is often reprobated; but with what reason? Why is an article cheap, but because it is abundant? Why dear, but because it is scarce in proportion to the want? Those who inhabit the locality of the two supposed markets are alike inconvenienced; these from a superfluous supply, those from a deficient supply. Acting on the above maxim, the merchant who buys from the one assists in obviating the evil of superfluity, and raising the price so as to pay the producer; and when he sells in the other, the act tends to lower the price and remove the evil of insufficiency. He benefits both parties, and has his own advantage in recompense of his services. Let him spend a fortune in doing the reverse of this. He will make the cheap market cheaper, and the dear market dearer. Those will have more who had too much; and those have less who had too little. The man deserves to be beggared for his pains. It is the punishment of nature and Providence upon his pernicious folly. And, eventually, nature and Providence will beggar the nation whose laborious children are compelled to buy their food artificially dear, and consequently sell their products artificially cheap, by the class cupidity or the wrongheadedness of their legislators. Beggary for beneficence is honourable. But the beggary whose blundering has only beggared others is neither moral nor Christian; it is condemned for wickedness, unless excused by imbecility.

Sometimes it is assumed that there is a want of Christian and neighbourly charity in buying of the foreigner rather than of a countryman, the foreigner being supposed the cheapest vendor. The existing laws say we shall not do this. They raise, by duties, the price of the foreigner's corn up to that of home-grown produce. And this is done although the home produce of food for the population is notoriously inadequate. May not the multitudes who must go unfed unless they buy of the foreigner, and unemployed unless allowed to work for the payment which he proffers, ask the question, "Who is my neighbour?"

Whoever finds them work and food is their Good Samaritan. Whoever diminishes their profitable employment is but the churlish brother of that other parable, though born on the same soil. A churlish brother indeed; for his restrictions occasion suffering, destitution, crime, disease, and death. Compare, my lords, the annual returns of the prices of corn and the number of commitments. They are demonstrative of the demoralising tendency of the present system. It is a wholesale agency of sin and guilt. Adam Smith may not have been a sound believer; but his economical principles, in their application, coöperate powerfully with Christianity for the diminution of crime.

There is one circumstance which should make your lordships, as the heads of the Church, particularly sensitive at the present time. The incomes of your clergy are in course of augmentation by the working of the Tithe Commutation Act. Incumbents are enriched by high prices. In direct proportion to the distress of the poor is the stipend of the clergyman. The position is an unfortunate one. It can scarcely fail to bias the minds of such a body as the clergy. And the temptation is strengthened by the landed aristocracy, amongst whom they look for patrons, being the great supporters of commercial restrictions. Humanity, even under holy vows, is a weak thing in such circumstances. You are the shepherds of the shepherds; remember their frailty. Rebuke their compromise of the interests of morality with the dictates of Mammon. Counsel them to be the friends of the needy. Uphold their feebleness when it sinks before the frowns of lords, the wealth of monopoly, and the attractions of augmented tithe. Admonish them that gain reaped from the robbery of the poor man's loaf is an accursed thing, which they should dread to touch. Church revenues increased by laws which diminish the food of the industrious, and abridge their industry itself, are worse than money-changers in the temple of the Lord, and make it the more a den of thieves. Tell your clergy this, my lords; and if the love of the world render them refractory, scourge them to their duty, and so discharge your own.

No. VIII.

To the Women of Great Britain.

November 23, 1844.

Ladies,—By a majority of the other sex you are excluded from direct interference in political matters. On the wisdom or justice of this exclusion I make no comment. It suffices that by the same majority, and by universal consent, you are invited to interpose in matters of charity. There your right is unquestioned, and, by inference, your duty also. When there is the power to relieve suffering, especially if it be unjustly inflicted, right and duty are identical. To a good work of this description you are invited—and invited at the suggestion of some of yourselves—by the Council of the Anti-Corn-Law League. The peculiar reason why you should respond to this invitation may be given in one word: the Corn Laws are inhuman.

Who of you has not sympathised with the poor seamstresses of London, stitching through fifteen hours a day for three shillings per week? Who has not grieved over that weary toil and that wretched remuneration? Who of you—with all the legislative power combined of Queen, Lords, and Commons—would abridge that pittance by the worth of one farthing? It is abridged by the Corn Laws. Measuring its worth in bread, on which most of it must needs be expended, and comparing the Free-Trade price of grain here, close at hand, in our own Channel Islands, with the Corn-Law price, even in this comparatively cheap year, paid by the poor of this island, there is a difference of one-sixth, which fixes itself directly and distinctly on the Corn Laws. A difference of one-sixth, *i. e.* sixpence a week, is taken by the Corn Laws out of the seamstress's wages of three shillings. It is the worth of one day, every week, of that eye-blinding and heart-bleeding work. Is not this inhumanity?

You have been exhorted to compassionate these wretched people by Lord Ashley; yes, by Lord Ashley, who votes in the House of Commons for robbing them of this weekly sixpence, and belongs to the class for whose benefit the robbery is perpetrated! Take his advice, and estimate his conduct. Your injured sisters are not helped by society

meetings and sentimental resolutions and reports, and patrons or patronesses' names, and vituperation of Moses and Son. The first help is to get back for each her stolen sixpence. Repeal of the Corn Laws would give her that; and, by indirect influence on other monopolies, and on the state of trade, a great deal more withal. Help to obtain justice for her, else is charity an insult.

While the Paisley weavers were at their lowest depression, three years ago, a poor old man and woman there, overlooked perhaps amid the starving multitudes, were not forgotten by their sons, who had migrated to Canada. The dutiful youths were mindful of the first commandment with promise. They thought to honour father and mother by some of the first-fruits of the produce of their little farm. The custom-house of a monopolist legislature cares not for commandments. It respects filial piety as little as it pities starvation. The aged couple heard of the arrival of the package of oatmeal from their distant children—its opportune arrival—for they had neither food nor money for the purchase of food: they were famishing, and the Corn Laws told them to famish on, for there could be no delivery of the oatmeal without payment of the duty. This too I call inhumanity.

Many of you are not unfamiliar with the dwellings of the poor. You witness the host of privations which they endure from the fluctuation of employment, and the prices, often beyond their reach, of various articles deemed necessaries of life. To a large extent, both the want of work and the disproportion of prices to their means are demonstrated results of monopolist legislation. Bread and sugar are at the head of the list thus rendered more costly. They are taxed to the toiling poor, that British land and West-Indian plantations may yield a larger revenue to the proprietary. The natural course of commerce is thus disturbed, and the manufacturer, by foreign retaliation, shut out of markets which else would enable him to give steady employment to multitudes. This is the soul of evil that presents itself to your sight in so many affecting particulars. You see families that are ragged because even an insufficient purchase of food leaves them no surplus for clothing; boys that cannot avail themselves of your gratuitous teaching because they must be earning something towards the

scanty common stock; men and women that absent themselves from church because they cannot appear there decently. Your moral and religious efforts are baffled by physical misery; and your attempt to alleviate that, aided by all the contributions of your relatives and friends, still beats unavailingly against the iron pressure that forces down the objects of your compassion. Your kindly energy wages an unequal contest. A fiend confronts your angel visitations, and battles with your benevolence for every cottage and hovel. You are overborne by inhuman law. It grasps its prey like a tiger. It is merciless as the devouring waves. The law must be conquered, or your mission is defeated, though it be one of light and love from heaven. While monopoly triumphs, charity is powerless.

Some of you have, in the daring of a beneficence intent upon spiritual good, ventured beyond the hovel of the wretched into the cell of the criminal. In seeking to relieve the wants and heal the diseases of the moral being, has it not occurred to you that causes are at work in society for the multiplication of crime which are capable of being abated? The tendency of law is, again, in this case a counteracting power to your zeal for good. A long course of years proves that the number of committals for crime varies with the price of food. The dearness of bread is the frequency of offences. A law to uphold prices is a law to promote crime. Such is the Corn Law. It wounds faster than you can heal; it does the work of evil by wholesale; it stimulates depravity, and breaks down conscience; it is a legally erected direction-post to the gates of perdition. As you value the souls you try to bring back to the Good Shepherd's fold, encourage those who would abolish the cause of temptation; strengthen the hands of those who would destroy some of the fruits of unrighteousness, by laying the axe to the root of the tree of monopoly.

In a thousand other ways must sorrow and privation fall under your observance, traceable, either entirely or in their heavy aggravation, to the laws which enhance the cost of provisions, and obstruct the extension and the regularity of trade. You know the secrets of hearts which are doomed to endurance by limited or failing means, with perhaps increasing demands for their application. The system which annually pauperises or banishes nearly 300,000 persons is a

blight on many homes that once were happy. There must be fearful struggles and hidden tears, and the martyrdom of ceaseless sacrifice. On your sex especially falls this heavy burden. On them, out of the turmoil of exertion, comes the care of savings, and retrenchments, and self-denial; theirs is the daily plan and contrivance and suffering. They are surrounded by the omnipresence of iniquitous law, ever taxing to the utmost their capacity of ingenious effort and patient endurance. What wonder if spirits often fail in the ceaseless endeavour, and hearts break in the repeated disappointment? For their sakes—for your own, suffering in their sorrows even when your circumstances are happiest—is your coöperation sought; such coöperation as it becomes philanthropic men to ask, and you to render.

The proposed bazaar, to be held in Covent-Garden Theatre, affords a most unquestionable mode in which your aid may be as efficient as it will be welcome. Information as to all requisite particulars is already given in the appeal put forth by the Council of the League, and need not be repeated here. On you must the plan be mainly dependent for success. Often have distinguished individuals of your sex adopted similar means for promoting charities of a limited and transitory description. What mere charity can be compared with the great and sacred cause of justice which you are thus invited to advance? And in this, as in the attendance with which you grace our meetings, it is not only the direct countenance and aid that is sought, but the moral power of woman, in whatever public good she advocates. How much you achieved towards the abolition of the slave-trade, and how much you may achieve towards the abolition of the starvation-trade! Monopoly, like slavery, will shrink from your withering rebuke. You will exalt the coming victory of policy in the triumph of humanity. Of you the toil-worn will gratefully think, as the table is spread for a better meal; of you the fainting heart, renovated by the dawn of more prosperous days; and on you will come the blessing of those who were ready to perish. It is fitting that not without your aid should this battle be won, but that foremost amongst the elements of triumphant success should be the strong and true heart of the women of Great Britain.

No. IX.

To Sir E. L. Bulwer-Lytton, Bart.

November 30, 1844.

Sir,—Is apology necessary for addressing to you a letter on the Anti-Corn-Law agitation? If so, I find it in your political career, ere long, I trust, to be resumed with the spirit unchanged by which it was animated; I find it in your literary position, a commanding and princely one, and made unrivalled by the degree in which your works blend the pursuit of the good with the enjoyment of the beautiful; and I find it in the fact that you are the author of *England and the English*, and of *The Last of the Barons*,—one, the most striking delineation which has been produced of our present condition; and the other, a masterly tracing to its source of the conflict between the new and old by which that condition is characterised. To whom can a free-trader, pleading for the enfranchisement of national industry, address himself with greater fitness than to the writer of the following passage in the first book of *England and the English?*

"I think, however, that I need take no pains to prove the next characteristic of the English people—a characteristic that I shall but just touch upon—viz. their wonderful spirit of industry. This has been the saving principle of the nation, counteracting the errors of our laws and the imperfections of our constitution. We have been a great people, because we have been always active; and a moral people, because we have not left ourselves time to be vicious. Industry is, in a word, the distinguishing quality of our nation,—the pervading genius of our riches, our grandeur, and our power!

Every great people has its main principle of greatness — some one quality, the developing, and tracing, and feeding, and watching of which has made it great. . . . . With France that principle is the love of glory; with America it is the love of liberty; with England it is the love of action,—the safest and most comprehensive principle of the three, for it gains glory without seeking it too madly, and it requires liberty in order to exist. . . . .

When we have once discovered the national quality which has chiefly made a nation great, we cannot too warmly foster and too largely encourage it; we should break down all barriers that oppose it; foresee, and betimes destroy, all principles that are likely to check or prevent it. It is the vestal fire, which daily and nightly we must keep alive; and we should consider all our prosperity to be coupled with its existence. Thus, then, if industry be the principle of our power, we cannot too zealously guard it from all obstacle, or too ex-

tensively widen the sphere for its exertions; a truth which our statesmen have, to be sure, diligently cultivated, by poor-laws that encourage idleness, and bounties, prohibitions, and monopolies that cut away the sinews of action."

This is only one out of many admirable passages in a work so full of political philosophy and prescience that every year which has elapsed from the date of its publication has increased its interest. If more be required as a reason for the use of your name at this particular juncture of the Anti-Corn-Law agitation, I may refer to an expression of yours, when the Whig cabinet made the question of the Corn Laws an open one: "By that move they have lost the counties." It is the recovery of these same lost counties that is now in question: not their restoration to the ranks of party, but their redemption from the grasp of class monopoly.

The county suffrage is capable of an extension not easily calculated. Every annual forty-shillings'-worth of freehold land or building is a vote *in posse*. The little shopkeeper or the frugal and thriving artisan may become a county voter. No organic change is required, nor any manufacture of forged votes, to create county constituencies that will acknowledge no allegiance to the present county dictators. An immense mass of property, entitled by law to representation, has hitherto—from ignorance, indolence, or indifference—been left without that sort of legal protection implied in the suffrage. To stimulate those who have the means to become purchasers of the qualification, and those who possess it to claim their right, are the present objects of the Anti-Corn-Law League. In the towns they seek the independent spirit that will counteract the abuses of territorial influence. Already it is apparent that registration lists, enlarged and purged as the law warrants, are tantamount to a representative revolution. The process is completed in Lancashire, progressing in Yorkshire, commencing in Middlesex, and contemplated in Surrey. Rapidly will it spread, even for the next registration, into other counties,—all counties in which there is much of a town population; and every where must the magnates of the bread-taxing party prepare themselves for electoral strife, frequently for signal defeat, on their hitherto undisputed territory. They have canted about agricultural protection

until the portent of agricultural democracy is in course of generation.

There is every probability, if the plans of the League continue—as assuredly they will continue—to be vigorously pursued, that the next parliament will exhibit an array of the members for many of the largest counties, and most of the great towns, on the side of Free Trade. The main strength of monopoly will consist of members for the small and venal constituencies, the pocket boroughs. Can a contest between such parties be long protracted? Any attempt to prolong so flagrant an outrage on public decency would raise a tempest which Free-Trade reforms must fail to appease unless accompanied by organic changes in the representative system, to prevent the recurrence of so shameful an anomaly.

By this move, then, the counties are won. Won for the Whigs, if the Whigs please to accept the counties and Free Trade together; and if not, not. Won for Sir Robert Peel, should he be sufficiently tired of his thraldom to throw off the yoke which evidently frets his spirit, and follow the suggestion of his true path to the honours of statesmanship marked out for him in *England and the English*. The opportunity you have there described is now far more easily within his grasp:

"It is one of the phenomena of our aristocratic customs, that a man especially marked out by birth and circumstance to be the leader of the popular, should be the defender of the oligarchical, party. Sprung from the people, he identifies himself with the patricians. His pure and cold moral character, untinctured by the vices, unseduced by the pursuits, of an aristocracy, seems to ally him naturally to the decorous respectabilities of the great middle class to which his connections attach him; and even ambition might suggest that his wealth would have made him the first of the one class, though it elevates him to no distinction in the other. Had he placed himself in his natural position among the ranks of the people, he would have been undeniably what he now just fails of being — A GREAT MAN. He would not have been Secretary for Ireland at so early an age, but he would now have been prime minister, or, what is a higher position, the leader and centre of the moral power of England. As it is, he has knit himself to a cause which requires passion in its defenders, and is regarded with suspicion by his allies because he supports it with discretion."

The "suspicions" of 1835 have become the reproaches of 1844. And in the interval a new power has arisen, independent of Whig or Tory politics, and capable of

honourable junction with any honest political elements—nay, more: capable of absorbing and obliterating all existing party demarcations, and of marshalling the battle, compared with which all others are but sham fights, between the one great public interest and the mightiest of class interests.

The commercial towns, the great trading communities of the empire, are in a position analogous to that of the period so graphically portrayed in your *Last of the Barons*—Industry and Invention working out their original question with Feudalism. Again flies the serf of the fields for shelter to the city. Again is growing wealth at war with noble blood. Tactics have changed. "The age of chivalry is gone;" and so is that of the importance of civic charters. Knights and barons have become traders in land; but still their aim is to make the artisans of the towns work for them without due remuneration. Parliamentary parchment is their banner, the broad seal their shield, and the custom-house their fortress. It is truly an ignoble warfare, but they wage it as of yore, and the citizens again cry "clubs," to the rescue. Our modern clubs, if the League may be so called, strike harder blows than those of old London. Legislation, like military aggression, has advanced to the point of reaction. The invasion of the towns is retorted upon the counties. Free Trade will send forth its train-bands of freeholders to repel baronial retainers; even the tenantry, that have been scourged to the poll like droves of oxen to market, will learn the lesson of independence. Ownership of the soil will be taught that it does not convey the lordship over political conscience.

The "national party" which you desiderated is arising. Should opposing leaders in parliament continue to stand aloof, to temporise and compromise, and to coquet with the unconvinceable and unmanageable champions of monopoly in food, then that party must find and mature its own leaders. Its objects are national interests. Its indomitable strength consists in being the embodiment of what you justly describe as constituting national character. It cannot fail for want of leaders,—it will make them. Substance never perishes for lack of form.

You are isolated from active politics, and have taken leave of fictitious composition. But the world will not believe that

you have broken the wand or buried the book whose magic has so often proved its fascination. Should the analysis of national character, or the philosophy of national history, again occupy your pen, what materials have been furnished by this continued struggle since last you speculated on *England and the English!* You may then describe how this agitation was conceived, not in the passionate assembly of the populace, or in the secret haunt of the demagogue, but in the counting-house, the factory, and the exchange: how men of business, in their peaceful calling, were driven by events to philosophise on the operation of laws and the mischief of commercial prohibitions; how they devoted themselves, their wealth largely, their time and toil unsparingly, to the redress of the evil; how the subject expanded in their minds, until from complainants of a partial injury they became the champions of a universal principle, assertors of the sacred rights of industry; how their crusade proceeded with no violence, but throughout the land they and their coadjutors and agents, wrought by instruction, winning the listening ear of crowds to a science which had failed of fixing the attention in the most highly educated; how, their petitions to parliament being disregarded, though signed by unprecedented numbers, they appealed to the creators of Parliament, and especially to those constituencies which are most identified with the intelligence and moral power of the community; and at last, how the argumentative victory was crowned by the legislative triumph, and the giant Industry—of your own apologue—freed from his bonds, fed all his children to the full, and won for them that peaceful empire over the world which consists in receiving the good that any nation can supply, and dispensing the good that any nation may require. Free Trade is the indestructible "Eureka" of the Anti-Corn-Law League.

No. X.

To the Non-Electors of Great Britain.

December 7, 1844.

I ADDRESS myself to those of you who aspire to the possession of the suffrage, and whose purpose is to use it, when obtained, wisely and honestly. Doubtless there are some amongst you to whom it is matter of carelessness whether they continue members of a slave class or gain the rights of citizenship; some who would traffic with a vote if they had it, and carry their consciences to the great mart of corruption; and some who have studied so little the true interest of the state and of individuals, that they would support the monopoly of food on the pledge of its advocates to uphold some peddling monopoly of theirs, not worth, perhaps, in the fee-simple of its profits, on the most favourable calculation, a six months' charge of bread-tax. I trust, however, that these are a small proportion of your number. In your multitudes, you are too sound of head and heart to be classed with either of these species of an infamous genus. Of Free Trade and the Franchise I can write to you with the confidence of attention and response. I do so now, because you are materially concerned, as it is my purpose to explain, in the present movement of the Anti-Corn-Law League.

The agitation for commercial freedom, and that for political freedom, have been carefully, if not necessarily, kept distinct and independent. The causes which have kept them so are still in force, and continue their operation. Yet, independent orbits have points of contact; all truths and rights are connected. Justice is one and indivisible. It cannot be successfully claimed in any department without facilitating its attainment in other departments. Reformers the most absorbed and exclusive in their particular pursuit are coöperating with other reformers, whether they will or no. They are manifestations of the same spirit — that divinely inbreathed spirit which teaches man to rise towards the true and good, though but partially apprehending the central orb towards which he tends. At times glimpses occur of the relation between all modes of reform and improvement. There are occa-

sional identifications of independent efforts. One such presents itself in the steps now taking by the Anti-Corn-Law League. The exertions of the Council are mainly directed to the revision and the enlargement of the county registration lists. In other words, it aims, not by superseding the Reform Act, but through the provisions of the Reform Act, at an extension of the county suffrage. In this movement the League becomes practically a society for political enfranchisement.

Freeholds worth 40*s*. a year, and therefore entitling the owner to a vote for the county in which the property is situate, are purchasable at the rate of about 50*l*. each. This well-known fact is the basis of the proposed operations. It is the germ of a power by which public opinion may be made to bear upon monopoly; a spirit of independence brought into successful collision with the influence of the squirearchy; the result of elections rendered no longer calculable by comparing Whig and Tory rent-rolls; and the peerage be restricted within its legitimate place, the House of Lords,—there, when opposing national interests, to be "girt" by the members of a popular House of Commons "beseeching or besieging."

Fifty pounds is the cost of enfranchisement. The price is not extravagant; it is rather above the valuation of a "nigger" in the West Indies under the old system. But there was many a "nigger" who would have worked, means being allowed, for its accumulation. The industrious and careful operative need not be hopeless,—he will find no better savings' bank. Many have in their lives paid much more towards benefit societies whose boxes were too near bankruptcy, than would buy the forty-shilling annuity that comes as interest for ever. The bridge between serf and citizen might have been more costly. Not much evidence of earnestness for political existence is afforded by him who will not scheme, and toil, and forbear, and save, that he may thus inscribe his name on the muster-roll of the free. The prize deserves some struggle.

Even the borough voter is but half a man for the public service if he aim not at adding a county vote to his privileges. The representation of towns is a specific provision for their peculiarity as towns—as aggregates of population, seats of manufacture, scenes of industry, and marts of com-

merce. Their portion of the House of Commons is a tribute to their distinct importance in the nation, as the House of Peers is to that of the great landowners. But the peer is, *de facto*, represented by the county members; and so should be the city or town. It is part and parcel of the county. Its own representation is more than balanced by the peer's hereditary seat in the legislature; and the tradesman's houses have equal right with the peer's fields to be included in the territorial representation. Parks and farms do not alone constitute a county. The land must be little and wretched if it does not grow villages and towns in addition. The American Senate is chosen by the states; but who ever dreamed of excluding the cities from the states? In England every man has his county as well as his country. He belongs to it, and its representation belongs to him. No matter for his vote elsewhere in another capacity, he has a right here; and if a right, then a duty; and if the law taxes both the right and the duty, then he should endeavour to pay the tax and occupy his proper position. Freeholders are the shareholders—in the eye of the electoral laws, equal shareholders — of the county.

As an extension of the suffrage, this movement is open to no exception whatever from the most captious opponent of organic changes. It only attempts to realise the ancient and existing constitution of the country. The rights of the 40*s*. freeholders date from the reign of Henry VII. by statute; and they were then only recognised, not originated. The League merely suggests that the great public right should be a living principle, not a dead letter. It only proposes to introduce on the county lists a class whose money qualification must be satisfactory to the constitutional alarmist. It is a strictly Conservative move, if any thing is to be conserved but corruption and monopoly.

The battle of commercial freedom must be fought by county votes. What stand can monopoly make when a majority of the representatives of the land is arrayed under Free-Trade banners? What heavier blow can be dealt to the oligarchy, by which taxation has been perverted to the purposes of selfishness and oppression, than by wresting the county representation from its grasp? Here it is that you are most wanted. Here it is that your votes will most

tell. They talk of allotments; buy your own allotments, to assert the justice that will supersede occasion for charity. Form committees in the towns of every county to coöperate with the League in facilitating the purchase of sufficient freeholds. It was once said that "every rood of ground maintains its man;" let every rood of ground that is come-at-able now make its man—its free man—to strike a triumphant blow in the cause of industry.

The rights of farmers and of labourers are in your hands. With you is that one thing needful for redress of which they are destitute, viz. independence. Your 40*s.* field or tenement involves no subordination to a power that can ruin you by a word. Your lease is for everlasting. No steward can send you adrift. Lord Stanley himself will not dare to stand by and watch you at the poll, as he threatened to watch his tenants, and thus defeat the design of parliament, should it concede the ballot for their security. He had better watch you at the poll; it may teach him a wholesome lesson. The landowning power, like other power when passing from the few to the many, must change its character and adapt itself to the spirit of the times. You will create a democratical landed interest. Thanks to the ancient law of our country, the very means by which industry and right have been overborne, under the forms of representation, are about to become those of their deliverance.

The people should every where prepare to push to the utmost the emancipating power which has so long been latent in the law. Let the monopolist landowners retaliate, if they will. Their retaliation will only be a further extension of the county suffrage, and that eventually must tend to good. But how many of them can retaliate? Mortgaged lands are not good for vote-making. For that growth they must first be manured with the guano of redemption. "There's the rub." The foe is already crippled. The game is in the people's hands. Onwards—for Free Trade and Political Emancipation.

No. XI.

To Messrs. E. Moses and Son.

December 14, 1844.

Gentlemen,—You are unquestionably the most renowned slop-sellers in Europe. The eye always adverts to your advertisements. Your shop-mark is on the daily broad-sheet of fame, as if it were only one of your own blankets. The poetry of your puffs, and the cheapness of your charges, are alike prodigious. Peel and Russell rise and set with the session; but you are always above the horizon—the Ursa Major of the Minories. "Custom" cannot "stale your infinite variety." You are, indeed, a "commercial phenomenon."

But rivalry is threatened, and you must submit to a comparison of claims. You are an "establishment;" but my Lord Ashley dissents, and erects a voluntary institution. His lordship is a philanthropist, and his love of man turns to hatred of Moses. He charges you with taking undue advantage of the need of needlewomen. Meetings are melted by his pictures of your oppressions. It is said that, although you rig the ragged, yet you starve the stitchers. The world cries out that you are too worldly. The queen dowager heads the hostile slop-shop, and the lists are up for contention of charity with cheapness.

Messrs. Moses, father and son, I know nothing of you but the public notoriety that you keep a very cheap shop and pay very low wages. Doubtless you act on the principle of the premier,—and when *he* has a principle, it ought to be acted upon, and if not by himself, there is the greater need that it should be acted upon by other people. Doubtless, I say, you act on the principle of the premier,—to "buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest." But you do not, like Lord Ashley with his corn, legislate for rendering dearer the market in which you sell. You undersell your competitors, and pull down their prices. He oversells his competitors, and keeps their prices up, to the consumer, by a tax. You make a cheap market cheaper by competition, and he makes a dear market dearer by legislation. Thus far, Moses, your Judaism is more merciful than his Christianity.

No, replies his lordship, for cheapness is the root of all evil. At the Society for the Protection and Employment of Distressed Needlewomen, last week, his lordship "wished to impress upon the meeting—for he felt it very deeply himself—the very great evil arising in all directions from that constant and unceasing effort to get every single thing—not only the common trumperies of life, but even the greatest necessities—at the very minimum of remuneration."*

The assembly cheered, ladies and all; and in the name of consistency, let no one of them ever try for a bargain again, but always inquire after the highest price when they make their purchases. The mischief is, however, less, it seems, of bidding low for the "trumperies of life" than for its "greatest necessaries." A curious distinction. The wealthy, if their wealth be in land, are the sellers of necessaries and the buyers of trumperies. Pleasant doctrine for the fashionables of Willis's Rooms, but hard measure for those who forego the trumperies of life, and, with a minimum of money, are advised to be content with even less than a minimum of bread.

Moses, how does this bear upon your customers? Many of them must go with bare backs, did not you cover them at the aforesaid "minimum of remuneration." They must make shift without shirts, did not you supply them cheaper than his lordship's charity slop-shop. Yours is the emporium for poverty-stricken purchasers. It drives nakedness down a degree lower in society. Sir Peter Laurie backs Lord Ashley, and scolds people for buying cheap shirts. This is cold work when the only alternative is to remain unshirted. That must they do, unless there were some such Refuge for the Destitute. Your shop is as good as a charity, with an association, and a secretary, and reports, and patrons. Much better, Moses. You clothe the naked without making beggars of them. They pinch their bellies for the sake of their backs; out of the daily bread which Lord Ashley helps to tax, they screw enough for two shillings'-worth of the "common trumperies of life," foregoing a portion of its "greatest necessaries," and walk away with an unsubdued sense of independence,—not less satisfied than if clothed in purple and fine linen, but less

* *Morning Herald* report.

disposed to rate Lazarus for obtaining the rags that stanch his sores at a "minimum of remuneration."

But then you only pay 6*d.* for the making of these 2*s.* shirts. Your needlewomen famish. They wear out eyes and fingers, brain and heart. Their privations are terrible. I will not blink that part of the case—God forbid. No; nor will I forget the fact that out of this fearfully earned 6*d.* a day, Lord Ashley and the landowners take 2*d.* by their bread-tax. The broad-acred philanthropists exact the 2*d.*, and you, whom they abuse, pay the 6*d.* It is "villanous low;" but not so low as robbing them of the 30 per cent out of that miserable pittance. That is by far the dirtier trick of the two, and the most cold-hearted. They get little from you, those poor needlewomen; but, were it not for you, would they get any thing? *You* have not cleared the country of cottages. *You* have not obstructed the progress of trade and commerce, and so diminished the amount of employment. *You* have not enhanced the price of food and the terrors of the poor-house. If you do but little in mitigation, and that little for the sake of business, still it *is* a mitigation. Lord Ashley says you should do more. Let him and the landed legislators do less, and your mitigation will grow thereby. On what principle, and by what law, are Jewish slop-sellers bound to feed the poor whom British landlords have impoverished for the benefit of their own rent-roll? Answer me that, ye aristocratical man-milliners of philanthropy, who talk of charity and vote for scarcity.

The professed object of Lord Ashley's society is to raise the needlewoman's wages to 9*s.* a week. If accomplished, the needlewoman may be thankful she is not a Dorsetshire man,—a man with a family, labouring on a farm. But let us see how this charity works. It promises to raise the cost of making a shirt to the price for which you are now selling the shirt. What, then, becomes of the poor purchaser, who can afford no more? The society ought at least to tattoo him gratis. He is driven out of the market —victimised by benevolence, made an example of—for being an accomplice after the fact to the "minimum of remuneration." There is another sort of result likely to happen. The Ashley slop-shop only withdraws a third of the applicants from the general competition. That vacancy

will soon be supplied by a rush from the hovels of starvation and the dungeons of the poor-house. The numbers of the destitute will keep down wages. The queen dowager might as well be patroness of a society for suspending the law of gravitation. Not a voice less will the "Song of the Shirt" have in its dismal chorus. There will be quite as many to bear the burden. The ranks will be promptly filled up by remorseless necessity. Still will "most unwomanly rags" hang loose upon the wasted form; the insufficient pay tempt to fraud or prostitution; and famine or suicide close the dreary scene. More work is the want. Proportionate abundance of employment, and that alone, can insure adequacy of remuneration. The valley of the Missouri would grow plenty of food for all the needlewomen of Great Britain, and the roughly clad growers have plenty of occasion for their services. My Lord Ashley cannot see his way to the repeal of the Corn Laws. He thinks Moses grinds the faces of the poor, and keeps his own booted heel upon their stomachs. Deliver us from our friends, and save us from the selfishness of sentimental benevolence!

One word more, not peculiarly for yourselves, but for the whole class of tradesmen to which you belong. There is no reason why any of that class should be dispensers of charity in the disguise of wages. Ignorant or hypocritical is the outcry against labour being purchased at its market price. Individually you must so purchase it, or you may shut up shop. What good would that be to the poor needlewomen? But, Moses, remember you are men as well as slop-sellers. Those whose fingers ache over your shirts are stitching their own shrouds. Misery toils in your cheap factory. You ought not to have done with it when you have paid its wages. The employers of the poor are their natural protectors. Unfairly have the tables been turned against you; but not altogether without fault on your part. You should have been the foremost to expose and denounce this state of things, and the system by which it is produced. Your inertness, your disregard of the wants and rights of the toiling poor, has allowed the authors of the wrong, the taxers of their food, the obstructers of employment, to come forward as their patrons, and point towards your heads the thunderbolt of public indignation for inhumanity which should have fallen on their own. You

and they are thus juggled into the wrong places. They should be in the dock, and you in the witness-box. Why do you not tell Lord Ashley that he and his class of monopolist legislators have wrought this shame in the land? Why were you not first in the field clamouring for justice? Why did you wait for the wretchedness—of which you had knowledge—to be found out and laid at your own door by its finders and its makers? Why have you handed over the poor to the care of courtly Cades and dandy demagogues? Retrieve your blunder. Leave not this sore disease in the body politic to be tampered with by legislative empiricism. Demand of Lord Ashley that he helps to untax the needlewoman's bread. Claim emancipation for the giant Industry, who, when free, will feed all his sons and daughters. Bestir yourselves for such a demonstration of public opinion as will enforce a wiser policy on the government. Come forward, though late, for the sake of those who depend on you, and make amends for past indifference, whether real or only seeming. Win the blessings of intelligent gratitude, instead of the curses of misguided ignorance and suffering. By your zeal, your votes, your remonstrances, be earnest for trade—more trade—and all whom trade feeds; the widow and the orphan, whom it supplies with work and shields from starvation. It is the duty which belongs to your position in society, between selfish lawmakers and injured millions. You who make the lawmakers can unmake the misery. Up to your duty, or both Jew and Gentile amongst you must bear the curse of Meroz!

No. XII.

Reply to "Some of the Women of England."

December 21, 1844.

Ladies,—The perusal of your reply to the writer of these letters will, in one respect, afford high gratification to the advocates of the Anti-Corn-Law League. You apprise us that the desire in your sex to see the labourer's bread un-

taxed, and the ports open for the admission of that food of which multitudes are in want, must not be measured by the number of those who contribute towards the proposed bazaar, or who—at our meetings, I presume—"raise their voices in admiration of the principles and proceedings of that League." Beyond this body there is, you tell us, a wider atmosphere of female sympathy in Free-Trade principles. You vouch for the fact, as yourselves belonging to the number who occupy that position. The soundness of your reasons for standing thus aloof I shall discuss presently. It is just first to observe, that those who do not stand aloof are so numerous, they shed such a halo of grace and beauty around our cause, they blend so becomingly the unobtrusiveness of woman's nature with her keen and courageous moral sense, their very presence has so purified the movement from the common coarseness of party strife in politics, the wealthier of them have given so liberally to our funds, and the poorer have so cheerfully imposed exertion and privation upon themselves to become contributors; their suggestions as to the bazaar plan—first in Manchester, and now in London—have been so judicious, and their co-operation so efficient; and bringing into our agitation whatever of peculiar truthfulness, delicacy, compassion, and piety constitutes their distinctive character, they have so imprinted on it the mark of a holy and Christian work,—that it is gratifying to learn there are more of their sex who will rejoice in their triumph, although they do not aid in the needful means for its attainment. It is something to have the good they do appreciated, especially by those who leave the previous exertion unparticipated.

You approve the principles of Free Trade, and yet withhold your countenance from the League. You will not contribute even to the bazaar, which is, at any rate, free from the offence given you by other proceedings. Allow me, then, to ask what else you will do to promote your own principles and satisfy your own consciences? You behold the production, by monopoly, of "sufferings" which you "commiserate." What is your process for their alleviation? Are you content to stand by as inertly as if you were utterly indifferent to the wretchedness of which you know the source and the remedy? Is it a sufficient excuse for doing nothing that those who are doing something speak

sometimes cringingly? If the very devils confess Christ, is that a reason for practically denying Christ? Are you willing to remember the injured poor in your prayers, but to remember them nowhere else? What is your intelligence worth, or your sympathy, if it shun the company of the like-minded, and adopt for itself no other course of action? Christian women, you cannot be at peace with yourselves if you prolong this moral incongruity!

You accuse the League of letting the doctrines of political economy supersede the laws of God. And whose laws are the doctrines of political economy? What are those doctrines but the exposition of providential facts? They teach mutual dependence, mutual service, and common interests in all the tribes and nations of mankind. They exhibit that wisdom which in varied climates and remotest regions has stored up the materials of useful exchange and friendly intercourse. They identify the objects of individual pursuit with the means of universal enjoyment. They abate the pride of wealth, and render industry honourable. They show how to replenish the world and subdue it, by making the wilderness a garden, and not the garden a wilderness. They interpose the strongest obstacles to the ravages of warfare, and as with the voice of angels raise the season-song of "Peace on earth, and good will among men." Were there no revelation, political economy would suggest a religion. Were there no Christianity, political economy would shadow forth some faint outline of its divine benignity.

You say that you can only join the Free-Trade cause, as sustained by the League, when it is "advocated in terms which are not at variance with the laws of God enjoining peace and good will to man." If your requirement only related to the principles on which the League is founded, and the objects at which it aims, nothing could be more reasonable. In that case, I venture to affirm that your immediate coöperation may be challenged. But if your requirement extend to all the speeches and writings of individuals, then nothing can be more unreasonable. You are requiring perfection of humanity, and making the absence of perfection an excuse for not helping the effort for improvement. No large associated body can stand such a test, whatever be its objects or whoever its sup-

porters. There is no mission to the heathen or charity to the poor, no work of truth or mercy, in the language of whose supporters you may not find some taint or flaw, and so justify yourselves for passing by on the other side. You thus exonerate yourselves from all useful service. You claim permanent leave of absence from the warfare of good against evil. You plead a letter of license from the labours of benevolence. And, strangest of all, the very terms of your fancied exemption are taken from the precepts by which it is most emphatically condemned,—the commands for practically evincing that universal love which would leave no grief unsolaced, no wrong unredressed, no want unrelieved.

Might not some of your charity be well bestowed on those whom you deem too fervent in a righteous cause? You allow them to "denounce every opponent as ignorant." There has been little of rebuke employed which such leave does not cover. Is ignorance a virtue in a legislator? Is it excusable, when he is surrounded by the means of knowledge? Does it not become a fearful sin, when the interests and lives of millions are dependent on his using his powers wisely? Should he be coaxed by soft words into contentment with his pernicious blunders? Is charity so enamoured of Barnabas that it must needs unchristianise Boanerges? Have not both their work in the world? And would Felix ever have trembled before Paul had the apostle only told the tyrant how much he loved him? Can we, in Christian sincerity, and consistently with moral integrity, call bad things by good names? Is there no difference between the righteous and the wicked, the friends of the poor and their oppressors, those who would secure to labour the full amount of its earnings, and those who make laws to lessen that amount and fill their own pockets? Love the sinner as much as you will, but do not hide from him that he is a sinner; you can do him no greater mischief; it is worse than being "angry with the wicked every day."

Is not your charity offended on the other side? Do you observe no falsehood, no calumny, no vituperation, on the part of monopoly? Is the bad cause purer in its proceedings than the good cause? If not, your disapproval, extending in that case both to means and ends, must needs

be much stronger than your disapproval of the League. And yet your conduct tends to support in preference what you most disapprove. For when the question is of repealing an existing law, the motive, as derived from public opinion, is exclusively formed by those who speak out against the law. The quiescent are acquiescent. Their silence tells for support. Their inaction is a sanction. Not showing themselves for change, they are reckoned as being against change. This is your inevitable predicament. You become responsible for the prolonged mischiefs, abhorrent to your principles and feelings, against which you do not protest. The muster-roll of monopoly includes all who do not erase their names by some act of adhesion to the opposite principle. Can you rest till you have done this?

When one looks at the titled and wealthy subscribers to the League, the notion of a "masked democratical movement" for "pulling down the aristocracy" is almost too absurd for notice. Doubtless many members of the League have their democratical partialities, as you, ladies, have your aristocratical partialities. No political creed is imposed by the League, nor by the opponents of the League either, who have from the first been, not very scrupulously, anxious to enlist the extreme democratical party in their cause. It is not by the League that any subsidised alliance has ever existed with the Feargus O'Connor Chartists—the physical-force democrats. And if there be any thing democratical in the present plan for extending and purifying the county constituencies, it is only that sort and degree of democracy which our governmental system has sanctioned and presupposed for centuries. The power to be thus called into action has been, however dormant, the people's privilege from the days of the despotic Tudors. The mission of the League is merely to make this part of the constitution a reality. It brings a "great fact" out of a dormant but consecrated principle.

There is some truth in your distinction—though it is rather fine—between the aristocracy and the landowners. Practically the two classes are identical. But it is not as an aristocracy that the majority of our legislators tax the people's food; they only do it as traders in land and the products of land. You may also be correct in thinking that the results of Corn-Law repeal have been sometimes,

and by some advocates, overrated and Utopianised. It would be very strange were it otherwise. Results so natural of this species of struggle for an immense good, obstinately withheld, may be much more easily and rationally accounted for than by your hypothesis of the middle classes deluding the poor: an hypothesis which serves to show how the extreme of charity towards the selfish wrongers of others may slide into the extreme of uncharitableness towards the injured party.

I have thus endeavoured to avail myself of what appeared to be your invitation to discuss certain religious objections to active coöperation with the League. Their religious character entitles them to a respect which could not else have been felt for difficulties that tend to render all extended coöperation for redress of grievances impracticable, and so to prolong the miseries which man inflicts on man by the abuse of power and authority. The inertness of a portion of the religious public on this question is a phenomenon which you deserve thanks for helping to explain. Explanation cannot justify it. Even by passiveness and silence to encourage those who grind the faces of the poor, and abridge their pittance of daily bread, is a virtual renunciation of the gospel. To leave the industrious under injury, and the helpless unaided, when protest and exertion may serve them, is not doing as we would be done unto. There is no love in the allowance of wrong even to the wrong-doer. We should bear and forbear with the mistakes of those who are striving to obtain redress, as well as with the mistakes of those who refuse redress. The Corn Laws are a demonstrated source of vice, wretchedness, crime, disease, and death. The path of Christian duty is most plain. The League affords opportunity for the discharge of that duty. It thereby enhances the obligation, and devolves upon all a deeper responsibility. Deepest of all should that responsibility press on those who make a religious profession. Neglected opportunities of good are the sternest of accusing spirits. Nor will they be silenced by carping at those who improve such opportunities earnestly, if not always—in your opinion—unexceptionably, and who have by their zeal been pioneers to clear the highway through a wilderness of ignorance, error, and indifference, in which Christian principle, moral duty, and human

feeling enjoin you to unite and advance. There is yet time to "enter into their labours," and accelerate their progress to the great result. To woman as well as man applies the admonition, emphatically uttered by the Rev. J. Burnett, at a Covent-Garden meeting of the League: "Let every one solemnly charge his (or her) own conscience with the high duty and sacred obligation of carrying out this work to its full and final completion."

No. XIII.

To all True Leaguers.

December 28, 1844.

A HAPPY new year to you!—happy in the hope that you are advancing with steps as steady and sure as those of Time towards the full accomplishment of the objects for which you are associated.

And that will be a happy consummation. There are some indeed who seem very anxious to abate the glow of your anticipations. They preach from the text, "Blessed is the man who expecteth nothing, for he shall never be disappointed." But their scripture is not canonical. The doctrine is as false as its influence is depressing. No change in the direction of Free Trade, whether in ships, silks, or sugar, has ever yet been without its measure of advantage. The mischief of the giant monopoly of corn may be calculated from the effect of such minor restrictions as have been removed. The merchant, the manufacturer, the tradesman, the workman, the housekeeper,—all would feel its abolition like the flight of the nightmare: and the very child reap the benefit in more school and less work, better food and brighter hopes. Something more to the purpose must be said than that Corn-Law repeal will neither realise Utopia nor introduce the millennium, before you are convicted of extravagance, or compelled to "'bate one jot of heart or hope." Philosophers have worn out their lives in intellectual labour, and philanthropists have perilled

theirs in compassionate enterprise, without achieving a fraction of the good already effected by your combination. True, you have not yet obtained a parliamentary majority; Russell has not renounced his fixed duty, nor Peel his unfixed policy; and therefore you are supposed to have done nothing. And is it nothing to have imbued the public mind with truths which it can never forget? Nothing to have taught multitudes to think and reason, to have rendered them alive to the power and worth of argument, and destroyed for ever the dominion of the cant phrases of party? Nothing to merge the spirit of faction in the pursuit of a well-understood national advantage, and given to public energy a patriotic purpose? Nothing to have raised the middle and trading classes out of the mire of a base servility, made them hold on for the right, and instilled the rudiments of independent thought and action? Nothing to have influenced the policy of the chosen minister of monopoly, and made his crooked ways tend towards the straight path, until he hesitates between class interest and public principle? Nothing to approximate towards the closing of the gulf that had separated the middle and the working classes, dispelling the delusions that forbade their union, and impeded thereby all prospect of improvement? All this you have done incidentally. It is the work, not of your victory, but of your agitation. Your conflict is more beneficial than others' triumph; your temporary failure is richer in good than a thousand successes.

The closing year has given you the working classes. The stones of the field cry out for Free Trade. Farm-labourers have got an inkling of the truth. Like Mary Ferris of Chalcut, they are "for Free Trade, and then there will be more work and more food." Look at that noblest compliment to Sir Henry Pottinger,—the address of the Manchester operatives, with 10,438 signatures attached to it in fourteen hours! Adam Smith himself might have penned the document to which those signatures are appended. Long have you toiled for the millions; it will now be with the millions a pleasant pledge of cordiality for the commencement of the year.

Union against disunion.—In the 5000 at Covent Garden there is unanimity; in the 40 at No. 17 Old Bond Street there is dissension. The committee of the Central Protection

Society reports that it has done nothing, and the members of the reporting committee are not all satisfied with the nothing they have done. "The tenantry of England are being silently but rapidly destroyed," says Mr. Allnatt. Certainly they are, but they have hitherto retained their "protection." It has done for them its little utmost. For months it has kept the duty at its maximum. What now can they have? If 20*s.* a quarter avail them not, will 40*s.*? How long will it take them to perceive that law may preserve high rents, but cannot prevent low prices? The promise was 56*s.*, the payment is 45*s.* The tenant's purse is drained to the tune of the former, and replenished to that of the latter. Peel's promises are like Cayley's quotations. Still the Duke of Richmond thinks that the farmers should "trust the Central Society." If they do, it will reverse the innkeeper's saw, and be, "Trust to-day and pay to-morrow."

It is curious to see how little liking the "Protectionists" have for the law which they associate to uphold. No voice cries "God bless it!" no tongue grows lavish in praise of its beneficial results. It pleases nobody. Neither the producer nor the consumer is satisfied. Prices are low, and people are unfed. Providence has repealed its practical operation in lowering prices by the abundance of the harvests; while the benefit of cheapness is impaired in the obstruction to trade presented by the sliding scale. The experience of cheap years is thus conjoined with that of dear years in favour of your object. A succession of good harvests ruins the farmer, as a succession of bad harvests starves the operatives. How long will the match last of "protection" against Providence? Peel's bill has weathered another year, but another year may weather Peel's bill. The sun that ripens the corn will rot the parchment. Abundant harvests will keep wheat down to Free-Trade prices, without the blessings of Free Trade to any class of society.

We are now in the height of the charity season of the year. Forty thousand persons have eaten their Christmas dinners in the workhouses of the metropolis and its environs. Almsgiving advertisements run along the columns of newspapers by the side of railway announcements. And yet a coroner complains that, on account of their number,

in many parts of the country, no inquests are held upon deaths by destitution. What is the moral of this fearful state of things? Is it not the want of some great remedial measure that shall infuse fresh life-blood into the frame of society? Will any almsgiving ever bestow the tithe of what is taken by monopoly? Free Trade is the only principle that can lay any plausible claim to the power of renovation. Yet the very parties who themselves plunder the poor of fourpence out of every shilling they earn, and then give them a penny for scores to scramble for at Christmas, talk of the "muddle-headed and cold-hearted economists"! Muddle-headed, because they strive for justice and prosperity according to the laws of providential government; cold-hearted, because they would raise the labourer to independence, and enable him to help himself instead of cringing with sickening gratitude for a pitiful boon taxed out of his own food and earnings. Oh, the poor have as many friends as the hare in the fable; and the loudest amongst them are the hounds! Few things are so disgusting as the cant of charity from the mouth of monopoly. Those whose consciences are clear of the foul inconsistency have a right to stand before the world as advocates of the little amenities of benevolence, even though they feel the unavailingness of all such doings while the great dictates of justice are violated and the great concession of industrial right refused. Not so the Pharisees of philanthropy, who destroy the temple of justice, and busy themselves in building an almshouse with fragments of the ruin. I wish them no worse, however, than that their "muddle-heads" may learn, and their "cold hearts" glow at the fact, that the first day of commercial freedom will begin the happiest of new years for our country and the world.

No. XIV.

To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., M.P., First Lord of the Treasury, &c. &c.

January 4, 1845

Sir,—Any attempt to prove to you the truth of Free-Trade principles, or the importance of their practical application, would be a superfluous procedure. You have made repeated profession of those principles. In various ways you have applied them, although it may be but partially. From the proposition of your tariff to the recent admission of Venezuelan sugar at the reduced duty, there has been a slow and cautious, but a distinctly perceptible, advance in the measures of your government towards Free Trade. The question to be argued with you is not one of principle, but of policy; not one of object, but of time, mode, and degree. You are afraid of injuring existing interests by sudden changes. And you are also not unobservant of the influence of your measures on the strength of your political position. This wariness has marked your whole public career, and is deeply inwrought into your personal character. The danger is, lest you should be too wary, and pass the point at which boldness is the safest caution. Did such peril only affect yourself, with yourself its consideration might be left; but it involves the condition and prospects of millions. Those who participate in your conversion as to principles; who are thankful for every step, however small, which you have taken in their application; and who are anxious for that immensity of national good which would arise from their consistent and complete adoption, have claims on your attention, however different from your own may be their political sympathies and antipathies. The topic is paramount to all party demarcation.

How much further can you go towards the introduction of a consistent Free-Trade policy without fairly grappling with the food monopoly? Are you not all but brought to a stand-still already? The landowners are alarmed and vigilant. You had a taste of their quality on the sugar question. They will not again help you in the demolition even of the minutest monopoly. You will no more be able to persuade them that they are the safer for the sacrifice of

others. It will be impossible for you to open your mouth on import duties but they will look down at your feet and think they see more than your boot covers. You are crippled for what you know to be the only sound commercial policy. Suspicion will track you through every speech and bill with the scent of a bloodhound. You will rise in the House with the vindictive monopolist in your rear, the Whig partisan in your front, and that magnetic telegraph at work between them which insures coöperation without coalition. What a helpless and pitiable condition! Can you endure it for the sake of office? Or can you long secure office by enduring it?

On the other hand, imagine the Corn-Law question disposed of, what ulterior division need you apprehend in your majority? In all remaining applications of your commercial principles, they would be a band of ready helpers. None so decided as they to raze every remaining fortress of monopoly, and not to leave one stone upon another. There would no longer be any apprehension from your measures. The threatening aspect would change to one of promise. In each new move they would foresee increasing profit, instead of impending peril. The spell of "protection" in his own case once broken, not a landowner but would cheer you on in your progress towards its utter demolition. The country would breathe freely in the grateful perception of each successive benefit. Controversy would give place to congratulation. The din of the old warfare of agriculture and manufactures would die away into the remoteness of historic distance. A career of useful statesmanship would open before you, limited only by the capacity of your own intellect, wherein classes might be harmonised, misery abated, the labouring many raised, and the truest glory, that of peaceful aggrandisement, be achieved for our country.

But the intermediate step,—"there's the rub." True, you peril office by attempting it, and might very likely be for a while unseated. What then? Are you satisfied never to apply your Free-Trade principles to corn? Or do you anticipate a better time by delay?

Never! Why, then, as I have already shown, you submit to be obstructed in all your commercial legislation. You consent to live the manacled and maimed slave of a

suspicion. You forego the noblest prize that remains to recompense the toils of office. You will neither do good nor win credit. Much too deeply is the thought of your ultimate purposes rooted in the minds of the landed monopolists for either forgiveness or forgetfulness to enter there. Years will not eradicate their suspicion. It will outlive your power, and be planted on your grave.

A better time! What can bring it? The Whig leaders are still too infatuated to preoccupy the ground. With that renowned ingenuity which builds a wall to knock their heads against, they hold themselves pledged to their fixed duty, and you are unpledged as the free air. They stick to their stand by the wayside, where you may pass on and welcome. As to them, delay only provides against you the chance of their having a lucid interval. The chance may be remote—it is not an absolute impossibility.

You have brought in a bill so lately! Psha! Sir Robert, you are too much of a man to mind that. It is a good deal longer since the enactment of your bill than that enactment was from the time of your declaration against any change. Besides, how stands your bill as to the different parties interested?

To the agriculturists, who reckoned upon its keeping up the price of wheat to 56*s.* the quarter, it is a complete failure. Nothing has been kept up but rents, unless it be agitation. At meetings of protection societies the farm-tenantry are declared to be posting rapidly on the road to ruin. Do not think of reading your history in their eyes, or hearing it from their lips. You can lose no popularity at their meetings. Even with the landlords your law is a forlorn hope. They merely think,

> "Better to bear the ills [or bills] we have,
> Than fly to others which we know not of."

You have no clinging attachment on their parts to overcome. They are in no state to offer stout resistance to a bold onset. Moreover, can they govern the country? Were they to turn you out, there is only one thing in the wide world which they could do, and that is, let you in again.

Wheat at 45*s.* is a good repeal price; no great shock would be given by the change; it would simply render

more clear what people were to do. Any great fall or rise will breed confusion and entanglement—desolation in the south, or commotion in the north. It is a price to take advantage of for action, as you would the conversion of a stock in the funds. The moment is a golden one. Old Time bends his brow for the forelock to be seized. There is utter destruction to the small farmers in the perspective, one way; and, in the other, the well-remembered horrors of Paisley, with many a scene of kindred misery.

Although the cheapness resulting from abundant harvests has baffled your bill, in its understood promise to the agriculturists, and stimulated a degree of manufacturing prosperity which could not have existed had that promise been realised, yet the condition of great masses of the people continues to be such as demands attention and amelioration. The agricultural labourers are unhelped. The swarms of our city population are unhelped. Every daily paper records some death by destitution. Every charitable society testifies to the necessity for change. Not a near-sighted philanthropist but has his nostrum. But they all obtain more credit for the fact of the disease than for the efficacy of the alleged specific. They are all witnesses that the poor "come off short" in the distribution of the food and wealth which their labour is the agency of creating. And for that the poor will take their testimony. The rest they set down as quackery. You, Sir Robert, know it to be quackery. You are aware, if not of the means of absolute cure, yet of the best remedy in the stores of legislation. Till that be produced, the mischief grows. Your bill can do no more for it.

I have spoken in general terms of the "landowners" as the lion in your path. Really, it is only a landowning clique. With such men as the Duke of Wellington and Lord Stanley, the money-worth of the Corn Laws to their class is altogether subordinate to political or party considerations. With the Dukes of Richmond and Buckingham the case may be different. The landlords whom they represent make a great noise, and, with the help of stewards, jobbers, and a host of sycophants and hangers-on, they muster their troops of dependent tenantry, and put on a big face of hostility. Is it much more formidable than what you so suddenly and virtuously confronted for Catholic

Emancipation? And is there any comparison in the results to be anticipated?

Do not fancy that I dream of persuading you. I deem persuasion as unlikely as conviction is unnecessary. You are making a blunder, and I am exposing the blunder; that is all. To be the greatest of those who lead has never been the praise or the ambition of your statesmanship; but you have commonly won the humbler fame of being the expertest of those who follow. In the present case even this glory is likely soon, by over-caution and prolonged delay, to be in danger of forfeiture. This is a great pity on your own account, a yet greater on that of the industrious millions who must endure the consequences.

No. XV.

To Sir R. H. Inglis, Bart., M.P.

January 11, 1845.

Sir,—You are the pattern of pious baronets, and a friend and father of the poor, though you neither play cricket nor ninepins. The Church took you for its champion when Peel apostatised, so that you gained Oxford while he retained office. Your orthodoxy is unquestionable, and your charity is conspicuous. You are a supporter of the *Standard*, and a hero in the *Herald*. You sympathise in relief societies, and in schools that teach no unsanctified science. You are alive to the dangers of knowledge, and your antipathy is ardent towards "the cold-hearted, muddle-headed school of political economists," who would make the industrious poor independent of the donations of their betters, and prefer legislative honesty to personal almsgiving.

In one of the journals above referred to—I forget whether "Goose" or "Shadow"—I read the denunciation just quoted. It does justice to the warmth of your own heart, and the clearness of your own head. It was civil, moreover, towards the right reverend chairman of the meeting

at which it was uttered,—the Bishop of London; one of whose Janus' faces looks towards political economy, while the other smiles on soup-and-blanket societies. You know how to back your friends.

True, you had the bishop on the hip; for the society was a marvellous one for even a mongrel economist to patronise, much more a projector of the New Poor Law. This Metropolitan Relief Association aims at being a provision for perpetual almsgiving. It obtained 20,000*l.* during the pressure of distress last winter, and it has only expended 9000*l.*, "the balance being vested in the public securities." It delights in doling out driblets, and making a little bounty go a long way. There shall be the maximum of the art of giving, with the minimum of the amount given. Its stock in the three per cents is the treasure-chest for an army of almoners. It will be charitable by compound interest. The character of the society so embarrassed the bishop that he uttered a great truth, though rather inopportune: "Mere liberality in almsgiving," said he, "unaccompanied by an endeavour to remove the causes of destitution which called it forth, would not answer the requirements of Christian charity." The inference is obvious. You and he would have been better employed in promoting the repeal of the Corn Laws. "Remove the causes." Sir Robert; to do that is worth more than all the warm hearts that were ever made so by being buttoned under broadcloth.

Your dealing with the poor is double, Sir Robert Inglis. You vote for the laws which pauperise their circumstances, and then patronise the societies which pauperise their minds. Thus your charity completes the work commenced by your legislation. Listen to the *Morning Herald*. It is the organ of your section of the Conservatives; and it speaks like an oracle. The improvement of the revenue has proved inspiration to its columns, and not Balaam's ass brayed sounder sense than its leader of Wednesday last:

"The pressing duty of providing for the comforts of the poor is felt by the Christian, because it is a part of his religion; and by the mere politician, because its proper execution lessens the danger of disorder.

This duty, however, is often as well performed by indirect as by direct means. Who will assert that the prosperity of the working classes, created by the spread of commerce, and by every other effect

of the people's confidence in their rulers, is to be degraded for a moment into comparison with the comfort of the same classes produced by alms-giving? It is for these reasons that we see that which the grumblers must also see in the prosperous state of the public finances—viz. that an improvement has set in, which promises to reach every order of the population, by giving a fair prospect of rewards for industry. By such rewards it is that the comfort of the labouring class is to be placed on a footing far more secure, and infinitely more conducive to manly feeling, than by encouraging any system like that which existed previous to the Reformation, and which, when that great event took place, had the effect of covering the face of the nation with numberless idle poor."

"Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." These are the views for which the leaders of the League have been denounced. This is the crime for which you crucify the economists as "cold-hearted and muddle-headed." Can you understand it? Saul among the prophets, and the *Herald* at Covent-Garden!

The "spread of commerce" creates "the prosperity of the working classes." That is the general principle which the *Herald* supports you in violating by upholding the Corn Laws, which restrict commerce. They restrict it; but, thanks to Providence, and the indomitable energy it has fostered in our Saxon race, they have not annihilated it. They restrict commerce; but the restriction is less in cheap years than in dear years. And last year was a cheap year. That is the fact, which the writer should have combined with the principle, in order to state the case fully and fairly. Cheap years—cheap as to the cost of food—are always times of manufacturing and commercial prosperity. The writer might have learned this long ago from Mr. Cobden, and from Mr. Cobden's masters in the science which you despise, but for which they are venerated by the world's intelligence. However, better learn it from the revenue returns than not at all.

The lesson has other bearings in which the *Herald* is still uninstructed. It only sees one-third as far as the "muddle-headed economists." In describing the prosperity of cheap years, Mr. Cobden has always characterised it as partial, under the present monopolist system. The farmers and their labourers are quite ready to confirm Mr. Cobden's theory. Hereupon our grandmother is sorely puzzled. She insinuates that her friends are not quite truthful in this matter. They are not suffering, she sus-

pects, "so severely as they assert." Agriculture needs more moral culture. Only see how she flounders:

"As to the ultra-protectionists, we would ask them, Can the agriculturists of England be suffering so severely as they assert, with the *home* and foreign markets manifestly so prosperous? If such be the case, then we and they have been heretofore altogether wrong in asserting the home market to be supported by the agriculturists, and the agriculturists to be the foundation of national strength and wealth: but we have not been in the wrong; the agriculturists have had the price of nearly all the food consumed in the country—they have carried that price in turn to the home market; and this it is which has given its amazing spring to commercial enterprise, domestic and foreign" (*January* 6).

A good specimen, this, of the game of blindman's buff; with an insurmountable difficulty of ascertaining whether the right cause has been caught by the bandaged inquirer. It is tolerably plain that, if the gross amount of money received by the agriculturists be the measure of commercial prosperity, then the dear years should be the thriving years of the manufacturing districts: wheat at 70*s.* the quarter, and not at 45*s.*, should give the "amazing spring to commercial enterprise, domestic and foreign." Political economy is very "cold-hearted," to make the manufacturers prosperous in proportion as they have less instead of more to pay for food. But that is the way of her school. There is no wriggling out of the facts.

This shifting the burden from class to class, and letting the one down as the other rises, is not, however, an ordination of political economy or of Nature. It is simply the result of the artificial situation in which the farmer is placed by the Corn Laws. His condition is a legal fiction in the sale of his produce; only the rent is a reality. He has taken a fallacy as the basis of his bargain for the land. At best he only buys a lottery ticket, where blanks and prizes come up alternately; his payment being proportioned to the prize. How, then, is he to share in the prosperity which the *Herald* prophesies? There is no other way but the abandonment of the artificial element, that perplexes and often pauperises him. Put him on the wholesome and steady footing of Free Trade. Let him have the means of calculating his receipts as well as his outlay. He may then thrive with his neighbours.

It cannot be assumed, until the disturbing influence of

the Corn Laws be removed, that "an improvement has set in, which promises to reach *every* order of the population, by giving a fair prospect of rewards for industry." Cheapness promises little to the farmer, until his rent is adjusted thereto. And the dearness that might enable him to meet his landlord's demands would swamp the present improvement in manufactures and commerce. If the Corn Laws continue, and there be no speedy reaction, he must be left to you, Sir Robert, and your "visiting and relief society." But do not expend on him all your funded alms. The vibrations of the system are incessant. Manchester must soon take a turn at your treasure; the artisans will then need your alms, and draw largely upon your consols and consolations.

Whatever be the purity and the piety of your motives, Sir Robert,—and assuredly, I call them not into question,—the brand you strive to affix on others must rest on the heart or the head of whoever denies justice to the poor while he proffers alms. The combination only makes your inconsistency the more conspicuous. The industrious will have little need of alms when no longer refused their rights. Cease to degrade and demoralise mankind with the gospel on your lips. Let the bounties of Providence flow in freely upon the land, according to the will of HIM who giveth liberally to all; then industry will never lack its fair reward, and you may bottle up your little bank of charity to all eternity.

No. XVI.

To the Camlet-Weavers of Norwich.

January 18, 1845.

I HAVE been reading, in the *Norfolk News*, a report of your proceedings, or rather a selection from your speeches, at a meeting held last Monday week, to consider the best means for resisting an alleged attempt on the part of Mr. Worth, a manufacturer, to reduce your wages. On this attempt I am not qualified to speak,—none of the circumstances have

come under my cognisance; and although an attempt to lower wages in Norwich, at a time when they have generally been raised in the great manufacturing towns of the north, excited both my surprise and regret, yet, without more information, it would ill become me to express an opinion. If you are wronged, may your resistance be successful! My present business is with the extracts before me, which are alike creditable to your good sense, your patient endurance, and your honest purposes, although not free from mistake, which, pointed out in a friendly spirit by one who formerly belonged both to your town and to your occupation, you will not, perhaps, be backward to perceive and to avoid.

The privations you suffer were feelingly and forcibly described:

"One speaker at the meeting observed, that time was when there used to be something like a friendly feeling between the employer and the employed; but now times were altered, and the poor weaver could scarcely wear his own clothes, eat his food, or pay his rent. In many cases they were dieted worse than the pauper, or the felon who had broken the laws of his country. The felon did get meat three times a weak; but where was the handloom-weaver to be found who could get it? The practice of reducing wages had been too long the fashion,—that they knew to their sorrow; that their homes, their ragged garments, and their careworn and half-starved appearance would fully testify. The individual who sat at the loom was not the indifferent person some thought him to be. Without him, where would be the fine dresses which adorned the persons of the fairer sex? Without him, where the garments which clothed the other sex? But while, however, nothing could be done in the shape of clothing without the aid of the handloom-weaver, that individual and his family were left half-naked. It was said that he that toileth should be the first partaker of the fruits of his toil; but with the weaver the reverse of this was the fact. What could be the state of that man's mind who was beholden to his friends for raiment, and who heard his children crying for food, without having it to give them? Yet such was the condition of the weaver."

That you who contribute to clothe others, should yourselves be clothed and fed in return,—that your honest industry should not fare worse than the felon in the gaol,—is too evident to be denied, and too sad not to be deplored. But can you give no better reason for this lamentable result than that "the practice of reducing wages has been too long the fashion"? A master manufacturer has other things to do besides following a fashion. In the old

times you lament, was there ever a Mr. Worth that gave more than its worth for your work? And will not the present Mr. Worth, unless he be a very wrongheaded man, and blind to his own interest, pay for it now whatever it is worth to him? Knowing nothing of the individual case, I can only argue on general facts. There is no such thing as fashion in the rate of wages. The competition of the men tends to keep them from rising; and the competition of masters tends to check their falling; and between the two they find their true level, from which, to any great extent, or for any long time, they cannot deviate. By this "true level" I mean, not the remuneration which industry deserves, but that which the state of any particular trade fairly allows. In a trade locally declining, and overdone by too many hands, this level is but too likely to fall far below what is requisite for the decent maintenance of the workman himself, to say nothing of a family. Such, I fear, is your case, and that of a large proportion of that much-suffering body, the handloom-weavers.

No master manufacturer can dictate the price at which his goods shall sell. He is quite as dependent upon the market as you are upon him. The most generous disposition in the world will not help him. He must encounter, at home and abroad, as fierce a competition as that which sometimes rages amongst yourselves. If he cannot sell as low as the foreigner in distant markets, or as his countrymen in those at home, there is an end of his ability to pay you any wages at all. He goes to the dogs; and so must you. On the other hand, extending trade makes him dependent upon you. He must advance his bidding for your help until he gets it, or he is thrown out in the race. Talk not, then, of "fashion." It is with fact, not fashion, that you have to do. You might as well say that bad harvests were the fashion a few years ago, and that better harvests are coming into fashion now. The laws of trade work upon men and masters as mightily as the laws of nature on the farm and the corn-field.

Is there no help? The needful preliminary to answering that question is, that the case be rightly understood. One of your speakers demanded indignantly, "What! do they think they do us good by enabling us to look upon our own misery? We can do that now with very little

instruction." Unhappily, you can. Athenæums and institutes will not feed you. But does it not make some difference whether even the wretched spectacle of your own misery be contemplated by an intelligent or an unintelligent eye? Would you beat the stone that hurts you, like a stupid child? Look further into your own misery and its causes.

You are too many for the funds that exist to be divided amongst you. Is not that a plain truth? No worth or worthlessness of masters can alter that. Those who can should turn their hands to almost any other kind of work which they are able to find. And do not bring up your children to a trade that is going down. Handloom-weaving is not an operation requiring much skill. It is a sort of receptacle for those who can do nothing better; a refuge for the incurable,—and a very miserable refuge. There is strength in wood and iron. They will beat the bones and sinews of a man. Skill is the quality in growing request. Little skill, little pay, is a sure rule in wages. Here the athenæums and institutes may tell, in spite of the question just quoted. Another of your speakers seems to have perceived this truth; and his appeal to the civic magnates for such provision on behalf of the weavers, no less than on that of the drapers' assistants, is well and powerfully urged:

"Another speaker said, 'I feel for every man in distress; I feel for the drapers' assistants. I will not dispute that they are overworked. But so are the weavers. I am glad to see the bishop of the diocese with all his theological lore, Mr. Gurney with his philanthropy, and the mayor with all his magisterial authority, assisting the drapers' assistants to better their condition; but I do not think it would be beneath the theological reputation of the bishop, the philanthropy of Mr. Gurney, or the magisterial authority of the mayor, for them to endeavour to do something for the handloom-weavers. Have we not minds and feelings as acute as the drapers' assistants? And surely, if those assistants, who are by us kept at work, deserve protection, we have a claim. I hope that, if the weavers are to be denied an athenæum, some plan will be thought of whereby we can have our minds filled with knowledge, as we wish to have our bodies filled with food. If it is important that we should have knowledge, all we want are the means to attain it.'"

Fairly reasoned, and with some home-thrusts. I trust it will not be disregarded in the proper quarters. And yet, after all, there is something better than charitable instruc-

tion, however frankly the means be given. Mechanics' Institutes will never flourish as they ought, until they are supported and governed by the mechanics themselves. A little help meanwhile is not amiss, but that is the condition of their permanent prosperity and highest utility.

And when is that time to come? When labour has fair play and free scope. All the world wants clothing, all the world is willing to pay for it, and all the world has got something or other wherewith to pay, which, if it be not exactly the thing that is wanted here, can be exchanged when it is wanted elsewhere for something of which we are in need. In itself, your labour is money's worth, though it be not Mr. Worth's money under present circumstances. The free exchange of products is not obstructed by your masters, but by their masters and yours, —by the landowning legislators, who make laws to keep up the price of food, and so keep down trade; to keep out foreign produce, and so cripple commerce. This is ruination both to your masters and yourselves.

Read, I pray you, the speech of Joseph Shaw, a working man, at the Oldham Free-Trade meeting. You will find it quoted in Mr. Cobden's speech at Covent-Garden Theatre, reported in this number of the *League,* and the whole proceedings of that and other meetings in last week's *League.* Read it now, and say if it does not very plainly show the general operation of the Corn Laws upon the condition of the working classes.

The action of those laws upon you is doubly mischievous; it injures trade, and raises the price of food. You have less work, consequently less wages, and those wages go for less in the market. Is not this to be thought of? Is not the Anti-Corn-Law League entitled to your hearty sympathy and coöperation?

Norwich returns one member who supports these laws, and helps to keep you down in your abyss of misery. Certain of your freemen, as the slaves are called, sold the cause of trade and commerce for drink and a bribe. Those men did you more mischief than the most grinding masters. They stood between you and the only hope that exists for your class. The only hope! — for if Free Trade cannot bring improvement and deliverance, the world has nothing for you but penury and starvation. That the blunder and

guilt of your last elections may be, on the first opportunity, redeemed, is the heart's wish of one whom neither years nor distance can make forgetful of his entrance in life as "A Norwich Weaver-Boy."

No. XVII.

To one of the Five Hundred Labourers paraded lately at Stowe.

January 25, 1845.

So you took the five shillings and the dinner, to do duty on the lawn at Stowe, and show her Majesty the semblance of "a bold peasantry, our country's pride"! You are a fine outline of a fellow; the smock-frock—whole and clean for the occasion—and the green ribbon round your hat became you well; and you, no doubt, shouted as lustily as any other of the hired company. You have earned your money, and had your pay; and now is there sense enough in you to ask your conscience whether the bargain was an honest one?

The question affects not your loyalty. Do not get rid of it by pretending to swell out an imputation on that. Probably you would, as certainly you could, have shouted "God save the Queen!" as lustily without the pay. You might have gone to see her Majesty, and worn your best garments—whatever they may be—to show your respect. That, too, could have been accomplished without being hired for the purpose. Nobody waits for a bounty to bless the Queen. She reigns over many hearts in which her predecessors had rendered homage to royalty a rare thing. Unbought greetings strew her path like flowers, and spontaneous acclamations fill the air as if they were a portion of the element. When she appears, the expression of discontent, or even—unless in respect—the maintenance of silence, is scarcely conceivable; and the purchase of popularity is as unnecessary as it is extraordinary.

Well, then, being as loyal as any proud peer or ragged

rascal in your county or the kingdom, why should you have objected to the clean frock and green ribbons, the dinner or the crown, for doing precisely that which you would have done of yourself? Hodge, I will tell you. What you did was not precisely that which you would or could have done of yourself. That would have been a true thing, and this was untrue. No smarter smock-frock than your own would have covered your torn coat or your no coat. You could not have afforded the ribbons on your hat—no, not to hide its holes. You would have looked Buckinghamshire, and not Arcadian. You would have been a ploughman, and not a player. And you would not have deceived the royal mind by a false exhibition of the labouring classes of your neighbourhood. There is the difference, and it is a great one. You have helped to impose on her Majesty, and leave a delusive impression on her memory. The whole five hundred of you have acted a falsehood. By appearances and action, though not in words, you are all accomplices; and in the face of high Heaven you have told your Queen a lie.

"On the estates of his grace the Duke of Buckingham, and through the many parishes where he is paramount, we, the farm labourers, are well to do; thriving, clothed, fed, and happy. We are free of his lawn as he is of our love. We rally round him as his retainers. Our green ribbons are bound in gratitude to his blue one. He is the first of farmers' friends and of ploughmen's patrons. The Queen shall long remember him as a princely host, and us as the merry multitude of his men."

That is what the five hundred told her Majesty in the language of appearances most unmistakable. Is it true? Is it within miles of the truth? If so, Buckinghamshire is much belied. People say that you labourers are most of you in rags; that you don't know the taste of butcher's meat from year's end to year's end; that your gaols are half-filled with poachers; that you are packed off any where to seek for work and wages; and that you get 8*s*. a week to keep yourselves and your wives and families. The Queen will never believe it. Her own eyes have seen to the contrary. You have forfeited your right to talk of distress. She knows what a set of trim fellows and jolly dogs you are; nothing like the wretched factory folks of whom some

farmers' friends have told her Majesty. You will always occur to her memory as a demonstration that the Duke of Buckingham's estates are manned by most prosperous ploughmen, ribboned reapers, dandy diggers, and thriving thrashers,—altogether a sort of pastoral paradise.

But, you say, it was only to welcome a gracious Queen, and the duke's gardener or gamekeeper tempted you, and who could resist the crown and the dinner? You would, if you had been a man, and not a down-trodden serf. You would have shown your own loyalty in your own way, and not become the varnish for his vanity. The more gracious her Majesty is, the more ungracious are you to sell yourself for her deception. She would have smiled on your care-worn wives and dirty children. She would have bent to the hurrahs of the ragged, and the memory of the sad reality would have sunk into her soul. There would have been pity for your poverty, as well as pleasure in your praises. You made a dear bargain with the duke. You became traitors to yourselves, your families, and your class; and all for five pieces of silver! Judas got thirty from a priest, and you had only to deal with a duke. Have you any hope that, now the job is done, he will better the bidding, or give any more of you a guinea to go away to Manchester?

Is this your first offence? Have none of you taken money before to bellow at meetings or bully at elections? Some of you are said to have served against the League. It is not unlikely. The falsehood and the bribe are both of the same sort as the present. And who is to pity you, if you take pay to tell the world how well off you are? Your conduct tends to vilify the farm-labourers all over the country. Judged by you, they can only be reckoned a set of most unreasonable rogues. The scamps, to let their wives go without bonnets, when they can afford to ribbon their own hats! You brand their complaints as causeless, and their deeds of desperation as most detestable. Mr. Dickens has sought to inspire the world with sympathy for the poacher under his oppressions, and with compassion even for the guilty madness of the incendiary. But, were there any truth in your exhibition of the labourers' condition, such wanton crime would mark the culprits as mere wild beasts, deserving only of extermination. You should

be beaten together for a battue, and humanity would scarcely condemn the butchery of such brutality. Down on your knees, and bless Heaven that you are not believed. Only have a little manhood in you another time, whoever may be the tempter; and find some means of retrieving your fault and folly.

The labourers in Northamptonshire have been signing parish petitions for agricultural protection; you may be ordered, perhaps have been, to do the like. All right, provided that you really have too much meat, and are in danger from over-eating. This is the case with the Northamptonshire labourers, or else they have made as big fools of themselves as you have. Sir Charles Knightley distinctly explained this matter, last Wednesday, at the Association dinner. He complained that two years ago "meat was about 6*d.* per pound, and it was now reduced to 4½*d.*" That is the grievance against which your Northamptonshire brethren have petitioned. Of course, you suffer from it also. Then he foresees a danger: "They would soon find that meat could and would be brought from abroad as fresh and as good as it could be had in Herefordshire." Against that peril the peasantry are invited to help their masters. "Then there was another measure,—allowing salt provisions to be imported." You perceive what an injury it would be to you for salt meat to be more plentiful and cheaper,—eh? Petition against that too, will you not? Sir Charles Knightley's fears and troubles are endless. "For his own part, he did not see in what way it would be possible to prevent this market from being glutted with foreign meat." Oh, horrible, you hungry dogs; think of the misery of being "glutted with foreign meat"! Shout against that, at the duke's bidding; petition against that, at the duke's bidding. It would affect his pocket a little, and your stomachs a good deal. He is at the head of all these societies against more meat and more bread. He is at their head, and you are at their tail, whenever you do any thing so dirty as to take pay, or obey orders, for a falsification of your own condition.

Did you ever see tall chimneys? Tramp into Lancashire and take a look at them. They rise as high as church-spires, and they take no tithe. In their neighbourhood the farm-labourer is always better off. He lives in the atmosphere of trade. So would you, were the Corn Laws re-

pealed. It is a healthier air than that of monopoly. There would, under the impulse of Free Trade, be more demand for corn, people would eat more, the farmers would want you, and you would thereby get more to eat. There would also, under Free Trade, be a livelier spirit of competition and improvement among the farmers; that, again, would make them want you, and give you better wages. You would eat meat dinners, though the Queen was not coming to Stowe. And should she drive your way, your wives would take care of your clean smock-frocks and green ribbons to meet her with; nor would her fine ear fail to detect the difference of your hearty from your hired hurrahs. Poverty is kept out of sight in these royal progresses. The more's the pity, while there is so much of it in the land. Yet better for it to keep away altogether, than to come masked and bedizened into the royal presence, and, for the bribe of bread-taxers, perform the disgraceful mummery of well-fed jollification.

No. XVIII.

To the Marquis of Normanby.

February 1, 1845.

My Lord,—Your lordship has not joined the agitation against the Corn Laws, but you have become an agitator for sanitary legislation, on behalf of the poorer classes. Of course, there is some distinction in your mind which renders you quiescent on the one question and active on the other. On the nature and soundness of that distinction I confess to feeling some little curiosity. How is it to be ascertained?

In your speech at the close of last session, which has been reprinted—I presume by the association lately formed under your lordship's auspices—for cheap and gratuitous distribution, you affirm that "the whole question of sani-

tary legislation seems to turn upon the treatment of those two elements, air and water; both equally necessary to the healthful course of human existence, both equally necessary in their external influence on our frame, and in their external use—one the primary ingredient in all human nutriment, the other the life-spring of our lungs."

And is it possible that your lordship actually forgot that food had any connection with the question? that its deficiency in quantity, or deterioration in quality, is foremost amongst the causes of disease and mortality? or that, by its abundance and wholesomeness, the frame is invigorated to resist many of the external evils which you are anxious to remedy? How came diet not to stare you in the face? Why were you not reminded of it by the reports of prison-keepers and poor-law commissioners? Why not by the rules of hospitals? or by the verdicts of coroners' juries, in cases of destitution? My lord, the admission is remarkable. Not only in the passage just quoted, but throughout your speech, you maintain, on this point, the silence of the grave. You have thus avoided all mention of the Corn Laws; you have also avoided the most important part of the subordinate topic with which you were dealing, and have left your argument miserably incomplete and maimed.

Whether this omission be ascribable to the limited view of the subject taken by your own intellect; to a vain desire of blinking the connection between sanitary legislation and Corn-Law repeal, lest aristocratical lawmakers should be startled and offended; or to an indisposition to pledge yourself, independently of your late official colleagues, to the cause of commercial freedom,—is very immaterial. I respect too much what I believe to be your motives, in the exertions you have actually made, not to endeavour to show how imperatively those exertions demand that you should go further, take broader ground, add good bread to the good air and water which you desiderate for the poor, and put your sanitary movement in its real relation, not as a substitute for, but as an adjunct or branch of, the far more comprehensive agitation conducted by the League against monopoly.

To procure by law the limitation of the landlord's power

of letting noxious dens for human dwellings, and to show, theoretically or practically, how buildings may be best constructed for the comfort of their inhabitants, are objects, no doubt, of importance and interest. Their pursuit is laudable, and may it be successful! But when accomplished, how much will you have done towards promoting the public health, if the present burdens on food and restrictions on industry remain untouched? Man cannot subsist on air and water. Rotten potatoes will taint the atmosphere of the best-ventilated abode. Out of work will soon be out of house and home, however excellent the drainage. Meat will not multiply of itself in the cupboards of model cottages. Nor will malaria be purified while monopoly is prolonged. Your scheme sits only on the threshold of the "condition-of-England question." It hearthstones the doorstep, while want fills the interior with disease and corruption. Food is the first essential. Work and wages are its conditions. Provide them, and the poor will not long be so perverse as to prefer damp and darkness to cleanliness and comfort. They are sent into the cellarage by sinking wages. When their payments rise, they aspire to parks and pleasure-grounds. The best houses that can be provided will not put them into a condition to choose; and when once they are in a condition to choose, they will not select the worst.

The nearest road, my lord, to your own especial object is through the repeal of the Corn Laws. The extension of commerce is the broad highway to the improved dwellings of the poor. Only with increased ability can there be the increased demand which will stimulate the speculations of builders and the ingenuity of architects. Both will come when they are wanted. Till then, those who are turned out of the narrow lane will crowd closer together in the narrower court. Expel them from the courts, and they will swarm under the unsheltering arches of the railroad. Drive them thence, and they will perish in the open fields. A select tenantry may be found for your pretty plans, but you cannot march the moneyless into their permanent possession. As soon might you expect a large shell to generate the fat fish to fill it. The fish makes its own shell; and, outgrowing that, produces another proportionate to its size. And so, though by a circuitous agency, will a

thriving population realise the more commodious abodes to which its resources are adequate.

Let any medical man treat of the sanitary condition of the people, and he will be sure, unless purposely avoiding it, to introduce the topic of food, and the means of its being procured. I have now before me an instance of this fact, in a pamphlet entitled *Public Health:* an Oration delivered on the Seventieth Anniversary of the London Medical Society, by Leonard Stewart, M.D.; 1844. It is only a bird's-eye view of the subject; there are but nineteen pages of the oration altogether. Yet this brief summary takes prominent notice of the topic which seems to be tabooed in your proceedings:

"We have narrow streets, dark and crowded passages, with noisome cellars and comfortless attics. There are the suffocating factories and workshops, the damp grounds and yards, the smoking labyrinths of what are called the 'back settlements,' all swarming with the toil-worn, the debauched, and the brutalised, strangely huddled together. Their scanty or precarious food, dejection of mind, discomfort, ill-regulated or intemperate habits, and filthy places of residence, often in the vicinity of stagnant water and of decaying animal and vegetable substances, are altogether the prolific source of disease and infection."

As the author expands his views towards the peroration of his address, he speaks with apparent unconsciousness the language of Free Trade, to express the natural tendency of the principle of sanitary legislation:

"When we glance at the actual condition of all countries, we shall find that there are strange accumulations of similar conditions; so that distribution seems to be pointed out as the leading duty of the age.

We see on every hand multitudes existing in the position of the fabled Tantalus—surrounded by the most desirable objects, which they are debarred from using and enjoying.

What numbers of persons of all ages, sexes, and occupations, cramped by sedentary, monotonous toil, when half-asphyxiated in their close and dusty workshops, would fain escape to the breezes of the hill-side! Many hunting tribes might safely share the excess of stimulants which the desponding artisan is now tempted to use, and miserably abuse.

We have Ireland exporting substantial food to all parts, yet half-starving her own peasantry. In the wild parts of North and South America, the carcasses of deer and of cattle are left to rot, while many of our own labourers are limited to vegetable diet, or nearly so. The mountains of Switzerland are carefully cropped and shorn of every blade of grass; the wine countries are tended like gardens; while

many of the richest plains of the Old World and the New, as on the Euphrates and Mississippi, are either abandoned, or unattempted by the hand of the cultivator.

We have at the present day the eyes of politicians and of speculators directed to the striking spectacle of the eastern coast of Asia, with its three hundred millions of Chinese, scantily fed, and often living in boats and on rafts for want of room on shore,—as contrasted with the opposite north-west coast of America, or the Oregon territory, whose only civilised inhabitants consist of some few hundred men, the servants of two or three private companies of merchants.

It is no far-fetched, improbable theory, to propose the greater equalisation of these opposite conditions.

> ' Nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd
> In unsuperfluous even proportion,
> And she no whit incumbered with her store.' "

Could I have, my lord, a more unexceptionable witness to the fact that you stop short of your own professed object, while the Anti-Corn-Law League is the real and most efficient sanitary association? The testimony, borne unconsciously, is that of a physician, engaged in no agitation, but quietly descanting on "public health" to his brethren of the profession, at an anniversary of the "Medical Society." It will not do, then, to hint at "far-fetched connection," "independent topics," "totally distinct objects," or any such modes of extrication, from the conclusion that you are as yet standing aloof from the one great combined movement towards the satisfactory settlement of the question of which you profess to have taken charge.

Nor can you, my lord, plead that you abstain from mooting before public meetings the points which must come before you as a member of the legislature, and perhaps again as a member of the cabinet. You do agitate, though only upon a small scale, and for an imperfect result. I rejoice that, so far, you are less squeamish than some of your late colleagues. They seem to think it enough that they lost office for proposing to take a step towards commercial freedom. They claim the glory of martyrs, and leave the people to work for the cause of themselves, as best they may. Ducal and right honourable champions of monopoly are not so regardless of their allies out of doors. They present themselves at the smallest gatherings. They preside over very limited and select assemblages; their troops are never unofficered—the officers frequently are more numerous than the troops. They lead and organise and agi-

tate, whilst you abandon to its own guidance the mightiest movement of modern times. You show no sign of sympathy; you stretch no helping hand. Like the gods of Epicurus, you sit remote, and merely deign to inhale the incense—when it comes. You are more coldly isolate from the people than even the enemies of their rights and interests. Nor can more effective security be taken, that when they triumph, as triumph eventually they must, the work will be their own,—a victory of the industrial classes,—without, save in a few bright exceptional instances, either aid or encouragement from the Liberal section of the aristocracy, and its political staff which holds in reversion the appointments of ministerial office.

My Lord Marquis, this is no petition; if a remonstrance, it is more for the sake of those who neglect a duty than for theirs who are well content and able to work out the just and beneficent objects to which they are devoted. We are on the eve of a time when to join the League will imply as little merit as to become the camp-followers of a victorious army. This may be seen by parties as well as persons who have eyes in their heads. It will look rather ridiculous in history should the summary of these times set forth Lord John Russell as the first of Free-Trade martyrs, and Sir Robert Peel as the first of Free-Trade ministers.

No. XIX.

To Thomas Baring, Esq., M.P., not *for the City of London.*

February 8, 1845.

Sir,—It is natural for those who have escaped being your constituents to scrutinise your parliamentary conduct, and thus ascertain whether they have or have not reason to congratulate themselves on their rejection of your proffered services as their representative.

You invite this scrutiny by your prominent position on

the first night of the session, as the seconder of the Address. You are "grateful" for the honour of being "selected" for that office. It is your pride to have, so far, the confidence of Sir Robert Peel; and you find in that some compensation for not having the confidence of the citizens of London. That you do so feel, is not less satisfactory to them than it appears to be to yourself. It shows how little you were qualified for the honour to which you aspired. He who can boast of the "selection" was not unworthy of the rejection. To be trusted by one whom nobody trusts is a very equivocal compliment to throw into the scale against the votes of the metropolitan constituency.

"Prosperity" is the beginning, middle, and end of your speech. You paint the condition of the country in the most brilliant colours. Wool and cotton, ships and iron, beam in your eloquence like the tints of the rainbow. In your figures, the people grow fat upon "tea, coffee, and sugar." Judging by your praises, if Pitt was a heaven-born minister, Peel is a heaven-making minister. The land is flowing with milk and honey. Hope may rest at the bottom of Pandora's box; she is not wanted by a thriving world, in the fulness of its enjoyment.

And is this the whole of the picture which, on such an occasion, should have been presented? Does the existing manufacturing prosperity descend so deep and stretch so wide as to require no abatement of your gratulations? Around this nucleus of thrift, is there no dark atmosphere of wretchedness? What says your colleague in moving the Address? "At no former period has the condition of the great body of the people excited so deep, so real an interest in the public mind. Never have there been so many plans discussed for the improvement of their moral and physical condition." Does this sympathy only come when it is least needed, these plans when they are least wanted? Is this sanitary speculation simply a scheme for the investment of surplus capital in beneficence? Does it not rather show that the prosperity which is undenied, and which no one seeks to depreciate, is insufficient for the wants of the popu lation? We have more trade and employment than we had; still we have not so much trade and employment as we need. The full exchequer leaves many stomachs empty. The good you describe as positive is only comparative. In

the words of Carlyle, "Man is yet unhelped." We have not got rid of "deaths by destitution." With all the increase of work, thousands cannot obtain "leave to toil." How is there to be more work, and work that will afford adequate wages, for willing hands? You did not propose to explain that to her Majesty in your address. Do you not know? Have you no conception of the means by which trade might be enlarged? Do you perceive no openings, rich in promise and boundless in extent? Are you aware of no restrictions by which those openings are barred against honest exchange and industrial enterprise? Oh, you know the talisman that would make the temple of commerce rise in the natural amplitude of its dimensions, and expand its gates for the reception of multitudes with far other greeting than what awaits them at the doors of the union workhouse. But of that extension of the present limited prosperity which the wants of multitudes require, and which Free Trade alone can give, you were dumb as death.

Equally silent were you on the gloomy shading which, from another quarter, ought to have cast itself over the brightness of your picture. You spoke of commercial, but not of agricultural prosperity. The tenant-farmer makes no figure in your speech. The life of the labourer is not delineated. You had not a word of sympathy for the struggles of the one and the misery of the other. You entered into no discussion of the discrepancy between their condition and that of the classes just now more prosperous. This omission is less excusable in the member for Huntingdon than it would have been in the member for London. Many of your constituents are connected with agriculture; and agriculture is, at present, not paying any body but the landlords, who, as such, are not agriculturists. That the real cultivators of the soil are distressed should not be overlooked because they are deluded. They say they are in the same boat with the landlords; but should they be allowed to sink for the sin of embarking in the pirate craft of Protection? Agricultural distress is an inevitable alternative in the effects of commercial restriction. Under the present system, the plough and the loom never prosper at once. Thriving and starving are like the man and woman—one in, the other out—of the old weather-house. They swing on the same pivot. Why did you blink facts which are

not less palpable to the statesman because they are perverted by the protectionists? The Corn Laws are ruining the real agriculturists. The tenant knows not whether he is better with a lease or without, taking it, as he must, at a factitious rent, and in the face of fearful fluctuations. The security by which improvement should be guaranteed is paralysed by the delusions of protection. The labourer is alike forlorn, whether dukes drink his health in water or in wine. They give his health, but he gets it not. They toast him, but he has no toast with his cold tea. Peel's prosperity touches neither the tenantry nor the peasantry; and you leave them untouched in your one-sided picture.

Another omission in your speech is that of all mention of the cause or causes of the present gleam of commercial prosperity. You shun analysis. The only hint at causation is when you declare it "impossible not to see that the real change of circumstances had originated in the adoption of the income-tax"! Perhaps you restrict this to the revenue. If so, it materially abates your argument of national prosperity from financial prosperity. To speak of trade as revived by an income-tax would rather exceed even the indulgence extended to movers and seconders of the Address. So you regard the prosperity to have come—as America is said to have been originally peopled—"by accident." You flinch from the palpable fact, that comparative cheapness has induced comparative prosperity. You trace no connection between the price of provisions and the impulse to manufactures. The effect of a cheap year is undiscernible to you,—unseen amid the benignant influences of an income-tax. They like it at Huntingdon, I suppose. Tastes differ in different localities, both as to men and measures. But why did you say nothing of cheap food? Why did you leave the vision of prosperity in a mist, when the proof of its resulting from permanent and progressive causes would have imparted the firm characters of reality? You are not yourself convinced of its permanence. The ceaseless changes to which restriction subjects the trade of the country present themselves to your mind, though you abstain from all allusion to them. This is another instance of the pervading mental dishonesty of your speech. When you come to the subject of taxation, the truth peeps out:

"Looking, therefore, to the safety of the country, and to the

maintenance of her credit and financial stability, on which that credit depended, and believing, moreover, as he did, that whatever amount of relief might be experienced generally by having recourse to an extensive reduction in the amount of taxation, it would be as unwise on the part of the nation to rely upon one year of great prosperity, as it would be for an individual to regulate his expenditure by one year's fortunate exertions in trade, — he considered, he repeated, that it would be exceedingly unwise and impolitic to make any important reduction in those taxes from which the present financial prosperity of the nation was derived."

This prosperity is, therefore, by your own showing, not a thing for the chancellor of the exchequer to rely upon. He must look out for the chance of a rainy day. You are content with leaving the trade of the country on a sandy basis, much too infirm to trust the Treasury thereon. In the sentimental days of Toryism, the cry was, "Perish commerce, so the constitution live!" The modern doctrine is to peril trade, so that the Treasury be replenished, even though it be by the exactions of the income-tax. Should a bad harvest send corn up to the prices of 1839, where will be your prosperity? The taxation will be safe, and there you leave it.

You profess to desiderate "a closer connection" with the United States. Are not the practical means tolerably obvious? Is there any way but one in which that desire can be gratified? While you uphold the corn monopoly, what are such professions but the vainest of words? Is not an American trade waiting for us, contingent simply on our taking its produce? Do you not invite the Americans to retort upon you the very admonition inflicted by yourself upon the Emperor of Russia? Nothing can be better for the purpose than your own words:

"He was sure the Emperor of Russia must have appreciated the feelings with which he had been received, and seen the desire that existed to bind the two countries in closer connection; and happy should he (Mr. Baring) be if, feeling, as he must, that there was no stronger bond of peace than the mutual interest of the two countries, the Emperor of Russia should be disposed to remove or modify some of those restrictions which now interfered so much with the importation of our produce into that country,—a measure which he believed would not only increase the friendly feeling between the two countries, but augment the receipts of his own revenue, and of which the only injury would be to the productiveness of the contraband trade."

While America may repeat your lesson, Nicholas may

have recourse to you for his reply. He is for Free Trade "in the abstract." What right have you to expect from the Czar of Russia that he shall surpass you in the practical application of principles? You confirm, by such admonitions, the continental prejudice that Great Britain aims at combining the advantages of Free Trade with other nations with those of monopoly for herself. Suggestions of this sort tempt all the world to compare practice with precept; they combine huckstering details with empty abstractions, and excite the derision which attends on manifest insincerity united with palpable inconsistency.

In October 1843, you declared the improvement of trade to be "a permanent reëstablishment of our commerce, and a fresh era of prosperity to the empire." Your party received the declaration with cheers, and yet now you have no such faith in that permanence as to dispense with even that portion of the income-tax which bears most heavily upon trade and industry. An abstract prosperity satisfies you, but not an abstract tax. In that same month you also told the citizens of London that Sir Robert Peel had restored confidence throughout the agricultural districts. Let the language continually held by the Protection societies answer that assertion. The reply is sufficiently confirmed by your own "expressive silence."

The voice of experience speaks most distinctly. Even during the eighteen months that you have been before the public as candidate and legislator, the effect of continued cheapness in manufacturing prosperity,—the need of a larger measure of that prosperity,—the artificial antagonism in which agriculture is placed towards other interests by the restrictive system,—and the peril overhanging every present mitigation of a distress absolutely unendurable, —have been proclaimed by events and observation so as to force them upon every reflective mind. What the cause may be of your eyes being closed against the perception of these truths, I cannot say; the consequence certainly is, that you have acquired no additional claim on the confidence of those who think that the permanent prosperity, not merely of the revenue, but of the entire community, is best guaranteed by that just, wise, and consistent policy of Free Trade on which you bestow a hollow assent and a practical hostility.

No. XX.

To the Duke of Richmond; the Marquis of Salisbury; the Earl of Essex; the Earl of March, M.P., Sussex West; Lord Beaumont; Mr. George Bankes, M.P., Dorsetshire; Mr. T. W. Bramston, M.P., Essex South; Mr. Darby, M.P., Sussex East; Mr. E. B. Denison, M.P., Yorkshire, West Riding; Mr. Du Pré, M.P., Buckinghamshire; Mr. W. Miles, M.P., Somerset East; Mr. Newdegate, M.P., Warwickshire North; Mr. Stafford O'Brien, M.P., Northamptonshire North; Mr. Pusey, M.P., Berkshire; Col. Rushbrooke, M.P., Suffolk West; Sir John Trollope, Bart., M.P., Lincolnshire South; Sir John Tyrell, Bart., M.P., Essex North; Mr. Wodehouse, M.P., Norfolk East; Mr. J. J. Allnatt, Berkshire; Mr. H. G. Andrews, Somerset; Mr. R. Baker, Essex; Mr. W. Bennett, Beds; Mr. Brickwell, Bucks; Mr. Blandford, Somerset; Mr. Brown, North Wilts; Mr. Cramp, Kent; Mr. J. Clarke, Lincolnshire; Mr. J. Ellman, Sussex; Mr. Hilditch, Salop; Mr. Fisher Hobbs, Essex; Mr. Hudson, Norfolk; Mr. S. Jonas, Cambridgeshire; Mr. S. Mills, South Wilts; Mr. Moseley, East Suffolk; Mr. Oakley, Herts; Mr. Pain, Bedfordshire; Mr. Rodwell, West Suffolk; Mr. G. Shackel, Berkshire; Mr. R. Smith, Rutland; Mr. Stevenson, Lincolnshire; Mr. Turner, Devon; Mr. Warsop, Huntingdon; Mr. Weall, Surrey; and Mr. Edward Wyatt, West Sussex.

February 15, 1845.

My Lords and Gentlemen of the Agricultural Deputation,—You are said, in your report of your recent interview with Sir Robert Peel, to consist of an equal number of landowners and of tenant-farmers. To which class does your principal spokesman, Mr. Baker, belong? Why were not land-agents named, as a third order in your constitution? Was Mr. Baker the nominee of the landlord or the tenant portion of your committee? The shopkeepers of London would not have thought, in any deputation of theirs, of choosing an auctioneer for their representative and leader. They would have found a spokesman of interests entirely identical with their own, and not one whose

emoluments might be enhanced by their embarrassments. It is not credible that any number of tenant-farmers, fairly left to themselves, would have desired to speak by the mouth of a land-agent; they are not so utterly besotted as that. Mr. Baker is not the representative of the tenantry. He is the landlords' man; he pleads the landlords' cause; his exposition to the premier was an apology for rent; his suggestions to the premier tend chiefly to the enhancement of rent; and putting him forward as the farmers' counsel was one of the many delusions which you, my lords and gentlemen, have attempted to practise upon the public.

The real object of your deputation to Sir Robert Peel was to obtain a remission of taxation, that is, a grant of money, in favour of the wealthy and princely landowners of this country. Disguise it as you may, that is the predominant purpose. The farmer cannot pay up the whole amount of his rent, doubled as that rent generally is from what it was fifty years ago; while his produce sells at about the same rate. Take a tax off his shoulders, and then perhaps he can pay it up. One of your number — Mr. Hudson — stated that in his locality the farmers had paid their last year's rents, but that "it was from the tenants' capital, and not from the profits of the farms." That cannot last long. You want to bolster it up a little. Let the farmer off for a portion of his taxation, and then the landlord need not let him off for any portion of his rent. The remission of a tax passes clean over the tenant's head into the landlord's pocket. The public revenue loses the money, and the landlord gets his rent in full. In short, the public pays the proprietary. Stripped of sophisms, and perhaps of blunders upon the part of some, that is your shameless proposition to the premier.

What a fine rhetorical artifice in Mr. Baker, to speak of rent as forming "so small an item in the actual expenditure of the tenant," that it is of no material account in considering either his distresses or their remedy! To his optics it is imperceptible. He can see the saving of fattening stock upon malt, but is quite unable to discover an augmentation of rent since 1793, that burdens the farmer more than the entire malt-tax three times told. A microscope for Mr. Baker to discover the minute millions, whose pressure he does not wish removed! Salve for his eyes,

that the little taxing man of the state may not eclipse that great taxing man, the landlord. He the farmers' spokesman!—the silly sheep have a wolf for their representative.

One of your tenant-members, Mr. Turner of Uppington, says that he is an extensive farmer, and has been so for twenty-five years; and that for the last three years his returns had been 100*l.* per annum less for every 100 acres of fair land he occupied than for the three preceding ones. But the three preceding years were years of scarcity and suffering never to be forgotten. The average prices per quarter were 64*s.* 4*d.*, 66*s.* 4*d.*, and 70*s.* 8*d.* They were also years of partially favourable harvests in Devonshire, though generally so bad. Would he have the Government, if it could, bring back such prices? What is his rent for this "fair land"? And what are his profits on each 100*l.* of his returns? The profits must be very high, and the rent very low, to make the latter an insignificant item; and if his landlord yields "returns" as well as his farm, the case is by no means desperate. Mr. M'Culloch calculates that the farmers' burdens, tithes, poor-rates, &c., &c., taken "together, may amount, at a rough average, to from one-third to three-fifths of the rent." Two-thirds are invisible to your deputation, as a margin for reduction, while three-fifths fill your sphere of vision. You rely on the fund of one-third as the Fortunatus's purse of the farmer; and pocket the three-fifths quietly as an inconsiderable trifle.

Another of Mr. Turner's facts bears an awkward aspect for your identification of tenants and landlords. He reports that "many farmers, who were not attached to their farms by the ties of a large family, or other circumstances, were quietly slipping out of their occupations, to live upon the remnants of their property." Better so than spend those remnants in rent. Your protection laws have driven these men to idleness and uselessness. To them employment is ruinous. They withdraw their capital to anticipate their landlords, and eat it out rather than pay it up for his consumption. They and their capital are thus lost to the country. With Free Trade they might grow corn for us, and enrich themselves by an easy migration. They could help to feed England by taking farms in France. Many a continental proprietor would be glad of them for tenants;

and the population which you cannot feed would be glad of their untaxed supplies. But your protective laws protect them out of liberty and profit; as well as the people out of plenty. The landlord's chain is round them. You will not let them work elsewhere, and keep their customers. You put down the "diligence that maketh rich." You say they shall not grow corn for Englishmen unless it be upon your land. And so they grow none at all. This you call being their friends—the tenant-farmers' friends. They deem it better to "take themselves out of that:" though it be at the sacrifice for life of all prospect of improving their condition.

The labourer was not forgotten in your statements to Sir Robert Peel. You went a-begging to him for the labourer also. You ask relief from the common burdens imposed by the state, for the sake of "the maintenance of the labouring class." And on what scale do you maintain them, that should embolden you to ask public relief, which is public help, for that purpose? In Mr. Baker's parish, six men are to be employed on each 100 acres. Carry that through the whole country—parks and pleasure-grounds, waste lands, townships, and all; it will not provide employment for the natural increase of the present generation of the labouring population. Your fields will not stretch; your acres will not multiply. Let a manufacturer occupy ten of your acres, and he will employ as many hundreds of hands upon that ten as you do individuals upon each hundred acres. He will quadruple your wages to the men, and pay the very children as much as you pay their fathers. On the ground where you pay pence in wages, he will pay scores of pounds. It is a false pretence, this plea of yours. Sir Robert Peel must look elsewhere, if he is seeking to remit taxation to those who provide employment for the people. No mendicant monks in the corruptest times ever begged alms, to be spent in the riotous living of a dissolute convent "for the love of God," half so dishonestly as you beg a boon from the public revenue for the love of the labourer.

The little island of Jethou is a landlord's monopoly, having but one owner; and the *Guide-Book of the Channel Islands* says of its inhabitants, "about six people live in Jethou; and happy the man who does not form one of the

six!" The six labourers on Mr. Baker's hundred acres remind one irresistibly of this pithy ejaculation. He proposes to work them because their wages come to less than the meagre diet of the poor-house. Without reckoning house rent, the "independent labourer" is worse off by 75 per cent than in the condition of pauperism. Take Mr. Baker's own calculation:

"By the operation of the new poor law, labourers thrown out of employment, and seeking relief at the parish expense, obtained it at a far greater increase of expenditure than would be the case if actually employed; and in instances where a labourer and family would incur expense to the amount of 17*s.* 6*d.* by the operation of the poor law by way of relief, he would, if actually employed, receive but 10*s.*, and thus the tenant farmers had found it their policy to employ them rather than suffer them to be relieved ordinarily through the medium of the parish rates."

So the farmer saves 7*s.* 6*d.* a week, in addition to the value of the labour, by working the peasant instead of pauperising him. How the labourer manages to make 10*s.* do the work of 17*s.* 6*d.*, and sustain those who require the larger sum, under all the advantages of catering for a number instead of for a family, it is difficult to imagine. Were a deputation of them to beset the premier, and tell their own story, it would be worth hearing. There would be fearful descriptions in it, and such as make one shrink and shudder to conceive. But what case do their sufferings make out for their 10*s.* employers, or their employers' bread-taxing landlords? Your labourer argument, at most, amounts to this: Give us public money by the remission of taxation, and the peasant will have a chance of being promoted into the poor-house.

Your desire, my lords and gentlemen, of giving information on the condition of the agricultural population, seems limited to private interviews with the premier. Some of you, at least, have no desire for the light that would be cast on the subject by a parliamentary committee. The power of having one is in your own hands. You repudiate authentic and complete information. What you prefer is a cut-and-dry statement to earwig the minister with. And you went to him less to plead your poverty than to show your power. You "girt him round, beseeching or besieging." The talking was left to plain Mr. This or That; but your lords and M.P.s were there, potently persuading

by their presence only. Even the absent Buckingham was thrown into the scale, using his privilege as a peer to be a petitioner by proxy. And was this well done? Look at the classes, numerous and necessitous, whose claims on justice and humanity for relief from taxation are infinitely greater than your own. The "great unwashed" for whom charity prepares its baths would be thankful for cheapened soap. The operatives, whose beverage is tea, would feel the slightest reduction of the duty a daily boon. The half-dungeoned inhabitants of darkened houses would rejoice in a few beams of untaxed light. The toiling clerk with his 3*l.* a week would luxuriate in the restoration of his income to its entirety. And you, my lords and gentlemen, muster your legislative strength, and forget your social dignity, to go and beg the bread out of these poor creatures' mouths, and, under transparent pretences about tenantry and labourers, ask the government to avert the reduction of your rents by remitting taxes to those who pay rents. "'Tis wondrous pitiful." Sir James Graham tells us that 1,500,000 persons are receiving workhouse relief. And is this a time for landed proprietors, with their trade-limiting monopoly, to compete with the destitute for some small slice of the treasury surplus? The very newspaper that blazons your titles, and reports the proceedings of your deputation, records also the suicide of an agricultural labourer at Finchley, who had been earning 5*s.* 6*d.* a week, paying 2*s.* 6*d.* for rent, and supporting himself and his wife on the remainder. "They had nothing but bread and potatoes to live upon, excepting once a fortnight about two pounds of beef, which they made last three or four days. They would often have been without bread even, had not a neighbour been in the habit of lending them some. The little cottage they lived in was a picture of cleanliness, and they had lived in it for thirty-five years. He was too high-spirited to apply to the parish for relief." And it is evident from the catastrophe which brought his corpse under the notice of the coroner, that had he been a lord and a landowner, however low his rents, he would sooner have hanged himself than have joined your deputation.

No. XXI.

To George Lynes, Camlet-Weaver, Norwich.

February 22, 1845.

Sir,—I like you for a correspondent. You write in a simple, honest, straightforward way. You do not falsify, like Mr. Cayley; nor mystify, like Sir Robert Peel; nor bluster, like the Duke of Richmond. The "sabbath-school education" has not been lost upon you. It has enabled you to express what you mean; and it has not enabled you to say one thing and mean another, like those who cant of independence for the country, and plan for profits to their own pockets. Never apologise again, man. Your language is as English as your feelings. Moreover, truth and thought go well in any language. They are the language of humanity.

Your account, in your letter to me in the *Norwich Mercury*, of Mr. Worth's attempted reduction of wages, stands plain and uncontradicted. It does him no credit, either for the fact or the manner. You say "no strike was contemplated;" and I say, "more's the pity," if there was the chance of its being effective. It is the workman's ultimate resource against such an attempt to beat down his labour below the market-price which other masters show they can afford to give,—and do give. There is one thing which always makes me feel very unforgiving towards a master manufacturer; and that is, when, by haughtiness, rapacity, or indifference, he widens the breach between the different sections of the industrial population. He comes into the labour-market for a weaver as he goes into the cattle-market for a horse. The weaver ought not to be treated less kindly than the horse, at any rate. To look only at the helplessness that arises from destitution; to calculate not merely his own occasion for labour, but the yielding spirit that makes famine eager to close the hardest bargain with capital; when "buying in the cheapest market," to make that market cheaper by unfair advantages; to be less careful of keeping the man than the machine in good working trim; and to confine to the warehouse or counting-house all thought of those whom he employs in the production of his merchandise,—these are the faults, I

trust, of only a small fraction of the class, which have alienated the hearts of the working-people, embittered their feelings, cherished their prejudices, sent their brains woolgathering after the nostrums of political, economical, and philanthropic quacks, and so recoiled upon employers and employed by marring that cordial coöperation which, if hearty at first, might, ere this, have done so much for the benefit of both by hastening the downfall of monopoly. The whole manufacturing interest suffers, and through that the whole nation suffers, for the unfaithfulness of some great masters and tradesmen to the duties of their position in relation to the working classes. They themselves suffer with others, in the long-run, though they have not the sense to see it. Industry is a common cause; and whether it be master or man who imagines an antagonism between their real interests, he is a mischievous blunderer. To have the confidence and zeal of their workpeople; to secure for them plenty of food and of employment: to guard them against the perils of vicissitude and pauperism; and to win for them, with them, and by them those commercial rights of which political rights must be the safeguard,—these are the true interests of masters. The wisest of them know it, and act accordingly.

I wish you could witness the zest with which Richard Cobden, at a League meeting at Covent-Garden Theatre, tells the thousands there assembled of the late successful strikes in Lancashire, by which the lagging masters have been whipped-up to the point that others had arrived at spontaneously. I wish you could see the crowded meetings in Lancashire on the Corn Laws, where the employers and the employed throng in together, one sympathy touching all, one determination pervading all, and one enthusiasm inspiring all; a grand testimony not merely to the common interests of different classes, but to the common principles of human nature, and the homage it renders to the Divine attribute of universal and impartial justice. George Lynes, you would remember it as long as you lived. Your sabbath-school education would make you exclaim, not only of the beneficent victory yet to be achieved, but of the moral beauty and sublimity of this united struggle for it, "the lines are fallen in pleasant places."

The Cobdens and Brights and their associates are

working for you, George Lynes, and your fellow-workers. Nothing else can help you but the destruction of monopoly, to which they are devoted as a sacred mission. What a condition you are in at Norwich! The *News* of last Saturday contained the following statistics of misery, authenticated by the name of Mr. Thomas Geldart. You know it all, and much more, not recorded here; I insert it for the sake of others:

"In the autumn of 1842 a very careful examination was made into the amount of employment amongst our operatives, when the circumstances of 1302 families, principally weavers, with some woolcombers and shoemakers, were found to be as follows:

226 families, or 806 persons, had had no work for six months or upwards, and had received not quite one shilling per head weekly allowance from the parish.

319 families, or 1421 persons, had only averaged eleven weeks' work during the preceding six months, and, with the parish allowance included, when out of work, had received one shilling and threepence per head weekly.

757 families, or 2698 persons, had averaged 19 weeks' work during the same time; but these had never received any parish allowance when out of work. These had obtained one shilling and eightpence per head weekly.

These calculations are all made with the earnings of the children included.

1302 families, 4725 persons.

The number of cases at that time being relieved from the Court of Guardians was 2315; the average number during the month of December 1843, was 2370; and during the same month of 1844, was 2339.

Therefore, when we consider the number of poor belonging to the country that have gone home to their parishes, the revival of trade amongst the woolcombers, and the employment found for some few upon the railroad, we are driven, I think, to the conclusion that the state of our handloom-weavers is worse than it was two years since, and that it will become more and more hopeless, unless some means can be suggested for their support.

The average cost of the poor who are maintained in the workhouse is something more than two shillings per head, and this where every thing is done upon a large scale and supplied principally by contract. What, then, must be the miserable condition of those who have to keep a house over their heads, and provide for a family, at the rate of 1*s.* 8*d.*, 1*s.* 3*d.*, or even 1*s.* per head weekly?"

The *Norfolk Chronicle*, a paper of opposite politics, confirms this statement, and gives the present condition of things in a notice of the principal manufactories, to which this summary is appended:

"It is not to be supposed that all the hands above enumerated

have constant employment. On the contrary, nothing can be more fluctuating than weavers' work. The manufacturing population suffer more from the tyranny of fashion than from any other cause; for the losses sustained by the manufacturers by the reduction of the prices of fancy goods a short time out of date, recoil on the workpeople in the shape of reduced wages, and frequently are the cause of throwing hundreds and thousands out of employment. When this happens, as it often does in this city, the last resort of the operatives is the workhouse. Of 2000 to 2500 persons, from year to year, in weekly receipt of out-door relief, three-fourths are weavers; among whom 300*l.* and upwards is distributed weekly. Thus the rate-payers, only 4000 in number, incur an annual loss of from 15,000 to 20,000 in consequence of the state of the manufacturing population. This loss is independent of the cost of whole familles of weavers in the workhouse. Whether the rate-payers in this city might not rid themselves of the annual loss, by creating a rate and carrying out some plan for the employment of the poor, is a question that ought to receive some practical and experimental answer."

That remedy will never do. You cannot make the rate-payers a trading company. To bring them into competition with private speculators would be fraught with injustice, and soon multiply the distress. You may be inoculated with the smallpox, but thriving manufacture must be taken in the natural way. Nor will charity do either. The rate-receivers tread hard upon the rate-payers. Want of work is evidently the main evil. Those who are best off in Mr. Geldart's list, and who never came upon the parish, had only nineteen weeks' work in six months. For seven weeks, therefore, they had been paupers upon themselves. Their idle time had to take alms from their working time. The eating to the earning was in the proportion of 26 to 19. In ordinary years the landlords' bread-tax would about cover that difference,—rather more than less. In dear years its action upon price has been calculated as upwards of thirty per cent. From 1838 to 1841 inclusive, it probably amounted to that proportion. Well, then, here is one mode by which those poor families would have found their 1*s.* 8*d.* per head weekly become worth about 2*s.* 3*d.* That is something. But the operation on the price of food, and, consequently, on the value of wages, is only one item of mischief in this corn monopoly. It keeps down trade, and, by so doing, keeps down work, wages, health, and life altogether. You will probably have a little spurt in business at Norwich when the railway opens. That will be more to your taste than charity, however kindly offered. The rail-

way will practically lessen your distance, promote the transit of goods, open up a few new markets. Free Trade is the great railway of the world; it opens remotest markets, facilitates the communication of nations. You want food,—there is plenty of it in the valley of the Mississippi; enough, there may be, to feed all the pauperism and semi-pauperism of England, besides its struggling and yet unpauperised operatives. Those who do or would grow it, want clothing, want machines, want a thousand things that England could furnish, and which they cannot get. At the same time, their ground yields them no profit for cultivation. The produce is not wanted there, and the landlords' law will not let it come here. What say you to this, George Lynes? Similar cases occur all the world over. There is plenty of chance for dear old Norwich yet. She has gone down from distance and dearness of fuel, from remoteness of position and cost of transit, from lack of that spirit of enterprise which has been generated in the stirring localities of the north; but let this boasted gleam of temporary sunshine in the commercial world encourage the means of enlarging her communications, and then let the crushing monopolies of class legislation be heaved off, and she will revive, and start forward in the race with the best. "Down with monopoly!" that is the word; and down with monopoly will soon be, "Up with the weavers!"

Thank you, George Lynes, for remarking on my indiscriminate allusion to handloom-weaving as an unskilled operation. I shall not forget that "shuttle-throwers" are not weavers. In the direct competition of muscle with machinery man is sure to be beaten. But machinery can never compete with mind. I had assumed that the handloom weaving in question, at your meeting, was the merely mechanical; because I was aware that in the north wages were rising for the skilled weavers, and was struck by the discrepancy. Your statement of Mr. Worth's conduct furnishes in part the explanation.

But you still adhere to your notion that employers have a voluntary power over the rate of wages. You think that any master might give higher wages to his men, and keep lower profits for himself.

In a few cases of local isolation and complete monopoly something of the sort may happen, but such cases are ex-

ceptional and rare. Generally it is impossible. The supposed master will not waste his substance in supporting his workpeople. If his profits are reduced below the average profits of capital, he will soon either lower their wages, or transfer his capital to some other investment, in which he can realise the market worth. But if, on the other hand, he is making more than the average profit upon his capital, think you that the surplus will long be left for him to divide between himself and his men? Other capitalists will speedily smell out his secret of larger profits than are usual. They will as speedily become competitors for a share of the advantage. They can afford to undersell him, and they will undersell him, until he and they are only making the ordinary and customary profits. Either way—by acting on your advice, to "give us poor creatures a little more wages, and take for themselves a little less profit"—he will bring himself into a fix; and if he persist, will soon be unable to pay any wages at all. He has no more control than you have over the average rate of profit attendant on capital. That depends on the quantum of capital in a country, and the openings for its employment. He is hemmed in, and hedged up, just as you are, by the demand for what he has, and the means of its supply. I repeat, "it is fact, not fashion, with which you have to do." You say: "The Supreme Governor of the universe rules the harvests, independently of human interference; it is otherwise in the case of our wages, or we should be much better paid." But that same Power ordains that from the self-same field industry and skill shall reap a larger harvest than stupidity and indolence; that the same produce shall command all the luxuries of life for him who lives under, and avails himself of, laws allowing the free exchange of such produce, while under restrictions it only realises a bare animal subsistence; and, consequently, that for the help employed by the master cultivator he shall have more to pay in the former case than in the latter. So that you see, George Lynes, how, in the case of farm wages at least, they are regulated by laws as much above us as the harvests themselves. The restricted producer, with the amplest harvest, cannot pay the wages which the unrestricted producer must pay, or the help will fail him. American farming exhibits these facts at the present moment. They are the decree of Providence

against monopoly and in favour of Free Trade. English manufacture exhibits them also. Markets for his articles are the manufacturer's harvest; to close them by Corn Laws is a blight. Labour, material, and capital may be thick as the golden wheat upon the ground. What are the products worth if exchange be restricted by law? And if the wages of the labourer be diminished or destroyed by monopoly, so, on the same principle, will be those of the weaver. The volition of the farmer or the manufacturer is a trifle in the account: in both cases there is a providential law. That law avenges interference with the free interchange which is its dictate, by the perils of unjust gain and of multitudinous suffering. That law will insure better wages, when the nation has virtue enough to rid itself of the crime and the curse of monopoly. Our Master above—all-gracious as He is—requires of us to employ the requisite means for obtaining large harvests and high wages.

No. XXII.

To Thomas Milner Gibson, Esq., M.P.

March 1, 1845.

Sir,—There are many who, like myself, have watched your public career with the liveliest interest. A rare openness to conviction, in spite of early associations or party connections, and a frankness of bearing and expression, not less rare, soon fixed upon you the observance of those who desiderate in political life a purer and loftier tone of morals than is generally to be found. You have borne alike gracefully, first, the punishment which corruption awarded to your sincerity, and then its reward in the selection which identifies you with the constituency of the manufacturing metropolis of the empire. And not from that constituency alone, but from all the industrial classes throughout the country, have you earned a feeling of deep and lasting gratitude for your uncompromising advocacy of Free-Trade principles in their general application; and for your late

able and lucid application of them, in your motion of Monday last, to the differential duties on sugar. The debate which you originated, and in which Lord Howick, and Messrs. Villiers, Cobden, and Bright so well supported you, is by no means one of the least impressive disquisitions on monopoly that has been submitted to public attention.

On Free-Trade questions the *Times* newspaper starts with the hare and runs with the hounds. Its acuteness anticipated at once the effect which the report would produce. No time was to be lost. Accordingly, its leading article on Tuesday morning is directed to the purpose of abating whatever influence in favour of Free-Trade principles, as applied to the importation of sugar, might have been produced by the discussion, on the preceding evening, in the House of Commons. Its path is as crooked as yours is straightforward. My design is to inquire into the character of the means employed for the accomplishment of its purpose. To what its columns have contained in favour of Free Trade on other occasions I shall not advert; I raise no question about its consistency; I shall cite no former articles. All I intend will be effected if I induce its readers to analyse the reasonings therein advanced; although it will be no cause of regret should this mental exercise lead to a similar mode of dealing with other lucubrations of the leading journal.

The article begins by suggesting the association of impertinence, or irrelevance, with your proposition. It is said to have "no especial bearing whatever on the details of the new ministerial settlement of the duties on sugar," but to be "aimed as much against a differential duty of 6*d.* as of 10*s.* or 15*s.*" The last clause is true; but the truth of fact is adduced to support a fallacy in logic. The fact is, that the motion had no exclusive bearing against high duties; but the bearing may be "especial" when it is not exclusive; it becomes especial by the very fact that the duties are high which the general principle is introduced to avert. Exactly in the degree in which protecting duties are onerous on the consumer does the application of the general principle of Free Trade become special. It is antagonistic to all, but especially to those which are very oppressive and injurious. The final sentence is a sophism,

and a sophism tending to excite a prejudice. It aims at making the would-be knowing ones shake their heads and say, "Ah, all an abstract impertinence; not business-like; nothing to do with these particular duties,"—when, in truth, the proposition had more to do with these than with any other duties on sugar proposed of late, simply because they are the grossest violation of the principle which it asserts.

I proceed to the next clause of the article:

"He (Mr. M. Gibson) belongs to a school of statesmen who legislate by general principles and mathematical certainties. In their minds, the axiom that if equals are added to unequals the wholes are unequal, is not more certain and universal in its application than the doctrine that a differential duty is so much money gained by a certain producer at the expense of a certain consumer."

Here is an attempt to mystify between the certainty of an operation on the mass and its uncertainty as to particular individuals. The extra three-halfpence of the poor needlewoman for her half-pound of sugar cannot be traced and identified, with police accuracy, through their passage from her fingers to the pocket of the great West-India proprietor. It is uncertain that the very coppers ever reach that destination. Nor can their change, by accumulation with others, into silver, gold, notes, bills, be put in evidence. And so, because the toil-worn wretch looks bewildered at the question, "My dear, did you ever give any halfpence to Mr. Gladstone?" and because Mr. Gladstone declares on his honour he never took her coppers, the *Times* would have us infer that there is no certainty about the payments of the one and the receipts of the other being enhanced by the operation of the duties. This, too, is a sophism. The next sentence proves the writer to be perfectly aware of its being so. Instead of showing that the loss to consumers and the gain to producers were in themselves uncertain, he proceeds as follows, upon this very repudiated assumption of their reality:

"If it be shown that the consumer enjoys some compensation for that loss, and, on the other hand, the producer is only repaid for certain peculiar burdens and difficulties, these reasoners treat such considerations merely as they would so much contingent matter,—a slight friction at the axle, a grain of dust in the balance. As long as they are expounding their theory, they make a wonderful parade of certainty and exactitude; but when, in the order of things, or rather in the course of talk, they come to the facts of the case, they relapse

into a popular gossiping style, as if vested interests, national engagements, ancient ties, and such incidental circumstances, were really beneath the notice of a philosopher."

The "uncertainty" is here altogether dropped. It has done its work. It has been fired off, and lodged in some thick head; and there let it rest. The writer flies off to a matter wholly irrelevant so far as the "exactitude" of politico-economical doctrines is concerned. A third charge springs up,—viz. that the proposition disregards certain things for which the British sugar-buyer ought to pay, and the West-India sugar-grower to receive compensation.

What in the world has this to do with the fact that differential duties tax the consumers, unless it be to prove that fact in the teeth of the writer's sarcasm on its certainty? The "compensation" and the "burdens" are entirely independent and irrelevant. Let us suppose the glories of negro emancipation and colonial empire to be so great to farm-labourers, handloom-weavers, and distressed needlewomen, that they ought to subscribe towards paying the planters for their help in realising those glories; and let us also suppose that "the peculiar burdens and difficulties" of those planters are so severe that even pauperism should contribute towards their mitigation,—still the question remains, how this affects the certainty of the doctrine of differential duties; and also how, whether that certainty be affected or not, such duties should be the best mode of collecting the contributions of beggars for the suffering proprietary. Is there not more than "a slight friction at the axle" of the argument? Who objects to inquiring into the "peculiar burdens and difficulties" of the West-Indians? Who objects to consider the question of the money payment for negro emancipation? The propriety of such considerations impeaches the doctrines of Adam Smith, just as much as it impeaches the doctrines of Euclid. They are plainly what the economists are accused of taking them to be—"so much contingent matter." Having first objected to the motion as wholly irrelevant, the writer now objects to it as exclusively relevant. The common character of both objections is, that they are so expressed as to stimulate dislike and prejudice.

When the *Times* eschews "a popular gossiping style" in narratives of sugar-making and such things, and even

the appearance of "certainty and exactitude" in "expounding a theory," it will be singularly consistent in sneering at those who do not so reverse the common custom of language and the fitness of procedure. Always to state your theories loosely and in a "gossiping style," and always to "make a wonderful parade of certainty and exactitude" in telling how Sambo and the overseer get on at melting time, are new canons of composition, whether for parliamentary speeches or leading articles. "Vested interests, national engagements, ancient ties," &c. &c., all *apropos* to a sugar-tax for the advantage of the planter, are specimens of a very old style, and of one which has often attracted "the notice of a philosopher" from the time that Socrates exposed the logomachies of the Athenian sophists.

Without pursuing the rest of this article so minutely, the following sentence affords a specimen both of the correctness and congruousness of its assertions:

"Whatever the character of the West-Indians fifty or a hundred years since, they have for these twenty or thirty years at least been the most universal and remarkable types of ruin and distress. And as for their management, we believe they have of late improved as much on their own former practice, and on the rest of the world, as our own manufacturers of every class at home."

The nine lives of a cat are nothing to the vitality of West-India solvency, which is thus capable of ruin once a year for a quarter of a century. And this continuous ruin has not been averted nor mitigated by the protective system, which is nevertheless to be enforced at the expense of the people of this country for its prevention in future. Nor have the twenty or thirty ruinations interfered with spirited improvements, comparable to those of "our own manufacturers of every class at home." Nor can there be a doubt of the future success of this improvement and protection after their signal and total failure, in leaving only "the most universal and remarkable types of ruin and distress." Such are the contradictions which, by a sort of steam pressure, the *Times* has contrived to condense into a couple of sentences.

While the *Times* supports monopoly by rating free labour at twice the expense of slave labour, the *Morning Herald* supports monopoly by rating free labour as less expensive than slave labour in the proportion of three to five.

Yet they both come to the same conclusion. Both agree in taxing the people's sugar here, and making war upon the wages of the free black labourers in the colonies. Notwithstanding all the cant that is abroad, it is plain the English people and the emancipated negroes are in the same boat. Monopoly would plunder us in the cost of sugar, and them in the wages of labour. . Even abolitionists join in a struggle whose watchword should be, "Up with sugar and down with the blacks."

The efforts you have made, the abuse you have braved, and the services you have rendered by extricating this question from the entanglement of mere party tactics, and anticipating in the luminous discussion on Monday the mystifications of Wednesday,—will not be unappreciated or forgotten.

No. XXIII.

*To "the Untaxed Foreigner."**

March 15, 1845.

Great Unknown! — Who are you? Where are you? Why does the mere sound of your name frighten the British farmer? What is the mode of your existence, and the source of your terrors? How are you able to ruin farmers' labourers and their families in the receipt of only 7*s.* a week? Are you "raw head and bloody bones" dug up from the grave by the Protection Society? Amongst African monopolists is your name Mumbo Jumbo? In what dreadful form do you become visible. Is it that of a cargo of wheat, or a stave of beefwood? By what incantations are you raised from the infernal regions? Must we first sup on Richmond's

* After the pledges which he had given in that House, and which he intended to fulfil, he was bound, when the measure for remitting taxes came up to their lordships, to move to expunge all those clauses which were for the benefit of the untaxed foreigner, and brought ruin upon farmers' labourers and their families.—*Speech of the Duke of Richmond in the House of Lords,* March 4.

salmon, then drink Richmond's whisky, and finally read Richmond's speeches, to see and feel your incubus presence?* To evoke you, must we say the Lord's Prayer backwards, especially the petition for daily bread? By what magic does the "coronetted fishmonger" and gin-spinner render you palpable and powerful, thus disproving the suspicion of his being no conjuror? Has "Granny" ever seen your awful presence? Can you be made a show of, for the benefit of distressed landlords, with a pole and a placard, and the duke to stir you up, as a creature "never to be tamed by the art of man"? "Oh, answer me; let us not burst in ignorance"—I should rather say "starve in ignorance;" for while the panic of your name is so potent, there will be little bursting amongst the peasantry, save the bursting out of flames and curses.

I should like to ferret you out. May "the untaxed foreigner" be chased and caught, without infringing the game laws? Is there no poaching upon his grace's manors in using your name for any other purpose than that of terrifying the farmer and taxing the public? Do tell us where you live. Remember, we have some power of annoyance. Your letters shall be opened at the post-office, and your untaxedness, which is a species of treason, reported to your own government. The duke shall propose a heavy duty upon you, in his threatened emendation of the tariff. Your position is perilous, which all legitimate tax-eaters, all lords of the treasury like one of the duke's brothers and one, in expectancy, of his sons, all functionaries of the Foreign-office, like another of the duke's sons, and all grooms of the Bedchamber, like another of the duke's brothers, should combine to extirpate, and, as Lord Bacon says, to "damn and send to hell for ever, all facts and opinions tending to the support of the same." And yet—

* (From the *Times*)—Real Glenlivat Whisky.—This celebrated and unequalled whisky, produced in Glenlivat, upon the estate of his Grace the Duke of Richmond, in the Northern Highlands, is now for the first time publicly introduced into London, under the patronage of his Grace.—Andrew Usher and Co., of Edinburgh, established there for twenty-five years, the sole consignees, beg to announce that they have established, at 1 Northumberland Street, Strand, a depôt for the sale of the unequalled whisky, in its native purity and strength. By his Grace's permission, the ducal arms on the seal and label will distinguish the real Glenlivat from all others.

that must not be. You are too valuable to be destroyed. You are as useful to the monopolists as "the Corsican" whose name first income-taxed us was to the anti-Jacobins. You are "untaxed" for our taxation. You must live for the life of the Corn Laws. The Central Protection Society will protect you over the world's circumference. Only come not here. The slave that touches British ground is free, but the foreigner that touches British ground is taxed.

There is not a country in Europe where the land does not bear a larger share of the burdens of the State than in Great Britain. At the commencement of the last century the proportion, here and there, was nearly equal. The land-tax then produced 38 per cent of the total revenue of the country. Our Richmonds have worked it down to less than four per cent. Even in the United States the agricultural section of the people is at a disadvantage, so long as their tariff lasts, in comparison with the manufacturing section. There our cotton-spinners are "the untaxed foreigner." The loom is protected at the expense of the plough; and, in relation to us, every foreigner who has aught to sell is necessarily taxed by the cost of transit. A natural tax is upon him, and ocean levies its fiscal dues unrelentingly. You are only a chimera, after all. "There's no such thing." You are invented by the selfsame ingenuity that discovered or fabricated monopolist principles in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

What the items are in the 430 minima of imposts, to the repeal of which exceptions will be taken, does not yet appear. They have to be sought for by the microscopic eye of class cupidity. Will that of greaves be amongst the number? It ought; for why should not the British hounds be dieted exclusively on British produce? At present, the proposition stands for allowing you to feed the duke's dogs, although you are forbidden to feed the labourer's children. A nice distinction: the dogs and their families will not be ruined by your intervention. The free supply of food is only perilous to humanity.

If the farmers would but look at you steadily, their nerves would soon recover. A proverb says, "the devil is not so black as he is painted;" and they might not find you so very dark. The most you can do is to perpetuate the

present cheapness. It was a paying price fifty years ago, and would be a paying price again were rent to retrograde to what it was at that period. The untaxed landlord is much more formidable to the farmer than the "untaxed foreigner." All this abuse of you is simply the trick of the pilferer, who cries "stop thief" the loudest. You are the friend of all who cannot afford to buy as much food as they desire; and they are no small number even at this comparatively prosperous season, when the Duke of Richmond presents petitions against cheapness, and argues that the manufacturing population is doing too well to be relieved from taxation. Your supplies would stimulate trade and enlarge consumption. You would teach the millions who still "rejoice upon potatoes" to require wheaten bread. You would thus make customers for our home producers. The farmer and the farmer's labourer would be all the better for you; they would have an ampler and richer market, and no longer be indebted to Corn Laws for that support which the Duke of Richmond says they yield, but which, if it be so, can be only a beggarly and dishonest subsistence.

When the Corn Laws were originally proposed, it was agreed that they would so stimulate production as to induce abundance and permanent cheapness. That pretext is finally abolished. Cheapness is now petitioned against and denounced. The mask is worn out. Another has replaced it. With a million and a half of persons helped by the poor-rates, we are told that provisions are too cheap. The merest trifles are not to be sold duty free, if such trifles can be produced on the property of his Grace of Richmond. He will "bear no rival near" the shop. And these dirty and odious pretensions are veiled under the pretext that you will damage the labourer and his family. The reasoning is too flimsy for analysis, and the hypocrisy too palpable for exposure. It stares detection out of countenance.

But they will work you a while yet, these hardy assertors. You will be trotted out in the Commons, as you have been in the Lords. You will be travestied in tracts and reiterated in reports. Your worth is known, and you will be clung to as the last plank of monopoly. The very factory children will learn to laugh at seeing how your

shadow terrifies the farmers. And at length—for all such deceptions must come to an end—the game will be up by agricultural industry resolving to be humbugged no longer. Rubbing its eyes and raising its voice, it will exclaim, "Avaunt, thou Bugaboo!" After that we shall hear no more of "the untaxed foreigner" as the demon who necessitates taxed bread for Britons.

No. XXIV.

To the Right Hon. Lord Howick, M.P., &c.

March 22, 1845.

My Lord,—Your able speech in support of Mr. Cobden's motion for a committee of inquiry into the effects of legislative protection upon the interests of landowners, tenant-farmers, and farm-labourers, has excited peculiar attention with many readers, by its allusion to the state of your own mind upon the subject of the Corn Laws. Always averse to the policy of "protection," and convinced of its expediency, you nevertheless describe yourself as not having been, until lately, adequately impressed with the deep and fearful character of the mischief which that system produces, and its incompatibility with the precepts of religion. Discussion has not been lost upon you. The multitude of facts brought to light has not been disregarded. Your own reflectiveness has not been idle; and you have continued to study the question, not only as a legislator responsible to your constituents, but as a moral agent responsible to the most awful tribunal. To your views, thus elevated, impolicy has darkened into wickedness. While you gazed, the mask of "protection" fell off and exposed cupidity; and even cupidity itself proved but another mask of the system, which fell off and exposed the guilty features of injustice. The speech to which I refer is not only one of the most cogent of arguments against a fallacy, but also one of the most solemn protests against a crime.

The sincere and earnest manner in which you indicate the progress of your mind, as to its perception of the real character of the question at issue, is most likely to be appreciated by putting your own words before the reader. They demand more than that fugitive attention commonly bestowed upon newspaper reports, and will sink into the minds of many whose habitual modes of thought dispose them rather to moral and religious views of a question which is often only presented amid a mass of statistical detail:

"It was in vain that they could hope to benefit, still less to vindicate, the owners of land, if they refused to go into a committee for the purpose of meeting and rebutting the charges made against them. They never could stand acquitted before the world if they refused to meet their adversaries hand to hand in the close quarters of a committee. If they refused that, they would lay themselves open to the charge of contending that the 'labourer was' not 'worthy of his hire.' Ever since he enjoyed the honour of a seat in that House he had always held the opinions to which he had that night given expression; but it was not till within the last two or three years that he had begun to view them in so very serious a light as they now presented themselves to his mind. It was not until lately that he had seen how grievously these laws infringed the sacred precepts of the divine law. When, however, he looked a little more closely at the state of the matter,—when he viewed the awful phenomenon which society in this country presented,—he could not but see that one of the worst symptoms of our daily increasing misery was the violent contrasts between the higher and the lower classes, between the condition of the wealthy and the poverty of the mass. If honourable gentlemen opposite doubted the existence of that poverty, let them agree to a committee. It was too hard that, while the rentals of the country gentlemen were doubled, as they had been within the last century,—while the whole scale of living in almost every class of society had been inconceivably improved,—while those of the middle ranks enjoyed luxuries to which that class were strangers fifty years ago,—though rents were doubled and trebled, the agricultural labourer was now in a worse condition than he had ever been, pinched by want and enduring every physical privation. When he looked at these things, when he remembered that gentlemen opposite were bent on keeping up rents while they kept down wages, he could not help asking them whether the awful words applied to the rich man, in the days of the apostles, might not now be applied to the ruling classes in this country: 'Behold the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped hath entered into the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth.'"

There is a double process, my lord, in society, by which many have arrived at this combined conviction of the im-

policy and the iniquity of monopolist legislation. Some have traversed a similar route with your lordship. They began with the economy of the question, and advanced towards its morality. Perhaps, in the first instance, they merely felt the personal pinching of a particular grievance. The Corn Laws diminished their business and distressed their workpeople. They found law—as the idler found a lion—in the way, and shouted to scare it from the path of their industry. The very resistance stimulated their minds to further inquiry. They soon encountered fellow-sufferers more than they had calculated, and antagonist classes stronger than they had anticipated. Like a blind man tracing with his hand the form of some unexpected obstacle, they groped this way and that, up and down and around, until the monstrous dimensions and heavy pressure of the mischief were embraced in their contemplation. In this process they have studied the statistics, not only of exports and imports, but of pauperism and disease, crime and mortality. The discussion has been an intellectual and moral training, qualifying them to sympathise with your solemn appeal as a Christian legislator. Others, unaccustomed to the disquisitions of political economy, have started from the opposite point of the compass. It shocked them that any human beings should deprecate the bounty of Divine Providence, that plenty and cheapness should be gloomily regarded and artificially avoided, that food should be repelled from our shores while multitudes were famishing, and that fertile lands abroad should be uncultivated lest the price of produce at home should be diminished in the market. This class of thinkers had a different set of fallacies to surmount. Bewildered awhile about "national independence," the "untaxed foreigner," "steadiness of price," &c., they have been prevented, by the continued discussion, from settling in a patched-up compromise between the laws of morality and the laws of monopoly. They have learned that the right is not the impracticable, that justice for the poor is not ruin for the rich, that unrighteous privileges are not a wise policy, nor political economy at any variance, but in full accordance, with the dictates of religion and humanity. These two classes are the main divisions of the Anti-Corn-Law League: the one represented by the great manufacturers of the North, and the other by the six hun-

dred preachers of the Gospel who assembled at Manchester to testify their coöperation. The commercial intelligence of society responds to the one, and its religious principle to the other. Their combination is the moral strength of the League. And the heart of both thrills with one common feeling of satisfaction at your lordship's truly statesmanlike and Christian declaration.

It is an unseemly exhibition, that in a British House of Commons the serious and reverent citation of scripture, on a moral topic, should be rudely put aside as cant of the Cromwellian age, and only characteristic of the ranter; and yet this is merely the natural tendency of the inverted morality of monopoly. Four nights afterwards Mr. Miles was reckoning up as grievances and evils that the quantity of meat in the country had been increased by a few hundred head of foreign oxen, that so much corn had found its way into the country, and that the price of wheat had not been higher than it actually was by some 25 per cent. What stuff the man's heart and conscience must be made of who affirms the people to have more meat and more bread than they ought to have, and at a cheaper rate, I will not pretend to say. The reason is obvious why such persons or their coadjutors should dislike the citation of scripture. They transpose its blessings and its curses. They ask a legislative defence against the bounty of Providence. They murmur that food can any where be produced cheaply. They make it dear should it approach our shores; they do so in the hope of making their own produce dear also, although the purchase of a sufficiency be still beyond the reach of multitudes. They obstruct that increase of home-grown food which might be stimulated by foreign competition. The labourer starves under their system, and the farmer is bankrupt,—still they persevere. Between the Christian's prayer and the earth's fertility they interposed their act of parliament. No wonder their perceptions are dulled to the difference between the word of God and the cant of Cromwell.

"The foreigners are now bringing their cattle to market," says Mr. Miles dolorously. He has not shown that the labouring millions have too much meat. What is this paltry addition, compared with the notorious want of the means of subsistence? The farm-labourers rarely taste

meat. Importation has brought it an inch nearer to their mouths, leaving it still at the distance of a mile. Our supply of the necessaries of life is deficient; and yet the law is framed for the diminution of supply. You have applied this argument, my lord, to the sugar duties. You have shown that the country pays as much for 18 tons as would purchase 28 tons. "There is a diminished supply of sugar, of coffee, of meat, of timber for building the poor man's cottage,—of every thing that the poor man wants; and this went through the whole circle of our protective duties. In that way there is a diminished supply, and thus are the labouring population pinched." True, my lord; and if not pinched for the profit of the landlord, then assuredly for the benefit of no one living being in the wide world.

The tone which your lordship has taken in this discussion is the more gratifying because a degree of confidence is felt in your earnestness, consistency, and superiority to party spirit, which is rarely rendered to public men, especially of late years. Your political career has afforded honourable instances of an adhesion to principle at the expense of a disregard of parliamentary tactics. The expediency you consult is that broad expediency which coincides with right. Your arguments are truths to your own mind, and not the counters of a game to be played with political opponents. Entitled by your position and proved ability to look forward to high office hereafter, you lay out no lines to catch support from different classes by ambiguous promises. By straightforwardness you win reliance for the present and hope for the future. The confidence attracted by your personal qualities and conduct is enhanced by the *prestige* of hereditary character and patriotism. The country is not unmindful of one whose word was ever held of more worth than oftentimes would have been the affidavits of a whole cabinet. It gratefully remembers the struggles and the triumphs of the father for political reform, and hopefully rejoices to see the son championing commercial reform. Persevere, my lord, in this noble warfare; continue to identify the morality of the question with its policy, and demand of the House of Commons its allegiance to eternal justice, as well as its regard for the public interest. You have created a power which looks to you for guidance. You

have excited an expectancy which promises for the nation a much-needed deliverance, and for yourself the purest glory. The path is open before you to a prouder eminence than mere party leadership could ever attain. Rest not till the laws of the land are reformed, and the laws of Heaven are obeyed, by the abolition of an unjust, pestiferous, and demoralising monopoly; and then inherit the blessings of a thankful people. From no hands would that good be received more gladly, as by none could it be more fitly bestowed.

No. XXV.

To the Farmers of Devonshire.

March 29, 1845.

Gentlemen,—And so you talk of sending two or three tenant-farmers into the House of Commons? It will be the wisest move that you ever made. How extraordinary that such a common-sense procedure should never have occurred to you before. It is a duty which you have neglected, and in its neglect been most blind to your interests.

Your whole class is unrepresented. In England and Wales alone you are nearly a quarter of a million, and a large proportion of you possessed of property. And yet there is not one of you in the House of Commons. Merchants, bankers, and traders are there; lawyers in abundance; officers in the army and navy; and a huge lot of landlords; but never a tenant-farmer. You might as well be disqualified by law, and disfranchised also. Practically, you are not part and parcel of the Commons of England. They are made up without you. The character of the farmer is omitted in the national drama. The analysis of the occupations of members tells the world that there is no such thing. Politically, you are of no account. You are a legislative nonentity. It is quite time that you

should ask yourselves whether this be either right or expedient?

Your landlords, indeed, are there, and, as they tell you, for your protection. A congress of wolves might say the same thing to a flock of sheep. Protection is always best in one's own hands. Redress of grievances is most likely to be effectual when the suffering party has some voice in telling the wrong and describing the remedy. The wearer of the shoe knows where it pinches. No stretch of sympathy can entirely identify the feelings of the payer of rent with those of the receiver of rent. Lawyers are not the best representatives of clients, nor landlords of tenants. Tell your own tale, men. They speak for you? The most willing of them labours under this disqualification, that he is not one of you; he belongs to a different class.

"Identity of interest" is sheer cajolery. A country has common interests, in which all share. So far as they are concerned, members of one class are as good as members of another class. How would the landlords like to be excluded upon such a pretext? They would at once begin to talk of their peculiar interests; you have a right to do the same. Your common interest with the landlord class is just the common interest of all classes; not a jot more. You hire land of one man; you sell corn to another; and you buy cloth and cotton of a third. It is just as important to you that the second and third party, as that the first, should be in a thriving condition. Let the merchant and the manufacturer be prosperous, and you get a readier market for what you sell, and an ampler supply of what you want. But the wealth of your landlord does not lower the hire of his land; even if it did, the bond would be no closer than that which holds you to the other classes of society. But it is not so. The landlord's receipts are your payment; his purse grows heavier as yours grows lighter. You would be quite as fairly represented—if you must go out of yourselves for members—by the corn-factor or the mill-owner as by the landowner. They are stuff as good, out of which to make "farmers' friends." You pull together quite as far; perhaps, if you look closely, it may appear that you pull together much farther. You have the common interest of industry. The greatest class distinction of all is between those who work and those who do not work.

All the drones live upon all the bees. You are told of being in the same boat with the landlord; so is the negro in the same boat with the slaver who kidnapped him on the African coast and will sell him in the Brazilian market.

What is the meaning of a House of Commons? Is it not a place for such as you? The landlords belong to the aristocracy, which has its House of Lords. Their class is fully provided for, without encroaching upon your premises. The townspeople are alive to this fact. They have long been trying to secure their own just representation; they often send folks of their own sort into parliament. Their voice is heard in debate, while you are as dumb as your oxen. Room is made for the man who manufactures the wool, while there is none for you who manufacture the mutton. Live by spinning cotton, and you may be a senator; live by growing corn, and you are a serf. Shame on you to submit to this, "bold yeomanry" of Britain!

Whatever the extent of common interest between you and the landlords, they have other interests to see after in parliament. Look at the Duke of Buckingham's blue ribbon. Did he obtain that for taking care of the tenant-farmers? Look at the Richmond youngsters,—the duke knows how to get his own burden lightened. The Duke of Newcastle, in his apologetic letter to the newspapers, values the borough nominations of which the Reform Bill deprived him at 200,000*l*. Many nomination boroughs still exist—nearly as many as ever; and that is an interest which their owners will be sure to look after. Appointments in church and state, army and navy, the court and the treasury,—your landlord members have all these to secure, touching them much more nearly than the concerns of the tenant-farmers. They want your votes, indeed, to make them important with the ministry, and put them in the way to get these good things; and your votes they have by asking for—through their stewards, perhaps—"or else—."

That you have been grossly deceived and abused is certain. The present parliament and ministry are of your making. How the promises of the hustings have been kept in the House, I need not tell you. A more barefaced violation of pledges the world has never beheld. Perhaps

you were not less duped in the promises so liberally made than in the performance so unceremoniously forgotten. Be that as it may, you must be very confiding indeed if you trust any more. Trust yourselves only for the future, or you will be greener than your own grass.

Mark the conduct of your self-appointed patrons. Have they battled for any one measure that can benefit you? Did they not refuse the inquiry that might have thrown light upon your actual condition and the means of its improvement? Was not their squabbling about grease and lard calculated to render you as ridiculous and contemptible as themselves? While they terrify you with threats of "the untaxed foreigner," have they relieved you from any taxation? And what would become of the cash had they done so? How long would it have taken to squeeze the surplus out of you by the rent-screw? Have the Corn Laws enriched any of you? What farmer's profits have doubled while the landlord's rents were doubling? With members of your own in the House of Commons there would be a chance of getting at the truth. There is none now. It is essential to the cause of agricultural industry that you should be there. It is due to you, as a distinct body with peculiar interests, that you should be there. The landlords know this. Have they ever moved a finger to send any of you there? Not they; and you may reckon upon a fiercer opposition from that quarter than from any other whatever, when you begin the attempt at having a representation.

This fact alone is a test of their sincerity when they affect to identify themselves with you. They put lawyers and soldiers into their pocket boroughs; any clever adventurer whom they can keep dependent will serve their turn. But see how they will look when it is suggested to them that a tenant-farmer would be an acceptable candidate for a county. You have a tough job before you. The endeavour to work it out will teach you many a lesson yet unlearned. That ugly thing called "notice to quit" will soon be flying over your grounds, and perching on your homesteads. The battle will be a long one, and many of you must be martyrs. Consider whether you have pluck enough. The leaders of the rebellion will never be forgiven. Ruin stares you in the face. Had you not better pay up your

rents quietly out of your capital, as long as your capital will last, and then go to New Zealand or the poor-house? The power of habit in yourselves will be against you. It has always been your way to vote for or with your landlords. You are traitors to yourselves by long custom, whose chains are hard to break. Look before you leap, and then, if you do resolve to spring, God speed you!

Not that I imagine any of you will go into parliament free-traders. At first you may, perhaps, be more protectionist than your landlords; but you will not stifle investigation, as they do; you will not cant about being the guardians of others' interests, as they do; you will not confound high rents with profitable cultivation, as they do; you will not mask the real objects of policy under false pretences, as they do; you will not look one way and row another, as they do; and you will not, by departing from the avowed, simple, and manful championship of your rights and interests, bring the very name of agriculture into odium, as they do. That is why every free-trader would rather see you there than those who are as unfaithful to you as they are unjust to society at large. Try it, then; by all means try it. If Corn Laws are to be maintained, you are the men by whom alone the country can be reconciled to their continuance; and if not, it is well that your stout hearts and strong arms should help to strike down a pernicious monopoly by which you are victimised, in common with the industrious millions of your fellow-subjects and fellow-sufferers.

No. XXVI.

To the Rev. Dr. Lamb.

April 5, 1845.

Rev. Sir,—At the recent agricultural meeting at Battle you said, speaking as a farmers' friend, "What they asked was, to be relieved from contributing to the state before they make their profits." There is another place, I pre-

sume, in which, speaking as a Christian minister, you say, "Do ye unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Will it please you to "put that and that together"? What the farmers ask, and with good reason, is what other people ask, and with equally good reason. Nobody envies the farmer's profits, if he can fairly make them, or desires his disproportinate taxation. Nobody questions your claim on his behalf. All we say is, "The same to you, sir;" that is our claim also. Do not help to perpetrate with one hand the wrong against which you sign a protest with the other hand. Do not put agriculturists on your right hand and all other classes on your left. We are no more goats than you: sheep certainly, if being fleeced is any proof. Deal impartially; and that impartial dealing may point the way to universal relief, instead of to universal aggravation.

Look at the labouring poor. There is something cold-blooded and inhuman in talking, even for argument's sake, about their profits. And yet the famishing, ragged wretches contribute towards the state, or towards what is exacted by the state, in every hard morsel that goes into their mouths, and every tatter that flutters on their backs. Do not talk of high prices. They were in a miserable condition when prices were high, and quite as remote as in their present miserable condition from the prospect of "profits." You propose to untax their beer; why not rather untax their bread? Why not their butter, cheese, sugar? They are less able to do without these than to do without beer. Your assertion, that "fully as much is drawn from the labouring classes by this (the malt) tax as was required to maintain the agricultural paupers of England," is preposterous. The beer is not drawn from them, and therefore the tax cannot be drawn from them. They have been taxed out of beer as they have been taxed out of as much of all the necessaries of life as they could possibly dispense with. But they perceive how they may be relieved. You know that the first step is by untaxing what they eat and drink. Forget not the artificial price of wheat in your anger against the artificial price of malt. Diminish their expenses. Plead for their immunity from taxation, until they are better fed, clothed, and sheltered. Include them in your demand for the farmers. You will be a better Christian, and not a worse agriculturist.

The manufacturing operative may also ask, like the negro, "Am I not a man and a brother?" He is better paid than the farm-labourer, eats more, wears superior clothing, and has a warmer house over his head. In all that he is so much the more taxed. Does your sliding scale mark him as above the pivot point of profit? There is work in Paisley and Bolton; but have surplus wages accumulated a preventive fund against the return of famine to Paisley and Bolton? Any weaver will tell you that low prices make prosperous times, and high-priced food disastrous times. He will tell you that closing "the ports to foreign countries" closes them against customers for the produce of his labour, and shuts the doors of employment. Have some regard, I pray you, for his "profits." He is God's workmanship, although the Creator has not made a tenant-farmer of him. The timber, on which you regret that the duty is reduced, gives him a shelter. The foreign fruit, on which you regret that the duty is reduced, provides an apple for his dumpling. The "smaller seeds," on which you regret that the duty is reduced, feed his little luxury of a canary-bird. But are these profits so ample as to bring you upon him for the taxation from which you would exempt the farmers? O Dr. Lamb! if you visit those long rows of factory cottages, go not like a roaring lion, seeking whom you may devour. Their profits are not a morning's mouthful for the state. Let them continue and accumulate a little before they are touched; or rather, let them be untouched by the pressure that still keeps them down.

Their masters you will think fair game. They are making their profits. And are they not making their payments too? They bear their full proportion of state burdens; and bear them without complaining. What they remonstrate against is the bearing of burdens which, though laid on by the state, are not laid on for the state. They remonstrate against a system of fluctuations, which one year fills the day-book with orders, and another year fills the *Gazette* with bankruptcies. They remonstrate against being taxed out of their profits for the enhancement of rents. They remonstrate against being taxed out of their markets for the benefit of monopoly. They claim, first, the remuneration of their industry and enterprise; and, secondly, the enjoyment of their profits after "contributing

to the state." If you object to this, the Christian minister goes to loggerheads with the farmers' friend.

Your argument, Dr. Lamb, only contemplates two things—making profits, and contributing to the state. You blink the fact of monopoly. A free-trader may adopt your reasoning, and it will serve his purpose as well as yours. Costly as our government and debt may be, the indomitable energy of the industrial population can make its profits, and pay for the support of the one and the interest of the other, if it be let alone. There are plenty of occupations that will pay. The world will yield us all a profit, with a surplus for the state, if we only exert our industry and our ingenuity with reference to its wants. What right have such as you to say that we shall not; and then, having diminished the national resources, to require that certain classes shall be extra-taxed, because certain other classes can only be enabled thereby to make a surplus profit?

If farming be as unprofitable as you say,—if it will neither yield support for the state, nor for the individual cultivator,—the only wise and right course would be to abandon farming altogether, and pension off those who are unable to maintain themselves in any other way. You want to pension them in a roundabout way, which keeps all the efficient portion of them unprofitably occupied, and cripples the means of the rest of the community. The resolution you proposed at Battle affirms, "that the malt-duty, by extravagantly enhancing the price of one of the necessaries of life, inflicts a cruel wrong upon the whole labouring population." The corn and sugar duties are a "cruel wrong" upon the same principle. A speaker that preceded you argued that wheat must be 8*s*. a quarter higher for the farmer to live. Twopence in every shilling for bread is a "cruel wrong upon the labouring population." Amongst you, then, it appears that the farmer cannot live without the condition of hard injustice upon the toiling poor. If the case be indeed so, that is Heaven's brand of condemnation upon the occupation of a farmer. The inference would follow, that it ought to be abolished. You cannot, as a clergyman, argue—in the pulpit at least—that the blessing of Heaven will attend any pursuit of which "cruel wrong" is an unavoidable condition. The

very leaves of your Bible would fly up in your face at the assertion, and smite you on the mouth. If you brought your Christian principles to bear on your monopolist statements, you would hate farming worse than popery, and denounce it as more damnable than infidelity.

Repeat your calculations, reverend sir; there must be some flaw. The fertility of British soil; the prospects of British agriculture; the facility of transport all through the country by land and water; the great home-market at hand; and the taxation which the wide waters of themselves levy upon foreign produce,—these are all intimations that farming cannot be in the forlorn and guilty predicament made for it by your arguments and those of some of your coadjutors at the meeting. There was a Mr. Selmes, "an extensive tenant-farmer," present, who "appealed to the meeting whether it was possible to keep up the rents that had been considered no more than fair for the last ten years?" What did you think of that, Dr. Lamb? It does not appear that you said a single syllable. There, then, at once, is the best opening for relief yet indicated. It inflicts no "cruel wrong" upon any body. Relieve your farmers from the additional burden imposed by the landlords under the specious but fallacious pretext afforded by artificial prices, enhanced by act of parliament, and hope begins to dawn. Relieve them further from the "cruel wrong" which is inflicted upon them in common with others by the "protection" duties of West-India and other monopolies; by the enlarged expenditure of their own families, created in consequence even of their pet corn monopoly; by the increased prosperity of the multitude of customers on whose ability to purchase they depend for their sale,—and you will put them on the high road for "making their profits" "before contributing to the state." At any rate, the experiment is better worth trying than obstinacy in confessed wrong. Should it touch you in tithe, it will compensate you in Christianity. You will have the consolations of conscience for the reduction of revenue. Religion will rise, though rents may fall. And you may remain the farmers' friend without being the foe of any other portion of the human family throughout the wide world.

No. XXVII.

To John Houghton, Esq.

April 26, 1845.

Sir,—Your testimony, unaided by any argument, would have been important evidence in favour of Free Trade. It is a voice from the fields, in the heart of the metropolis. The meeting at Covent-Garden Theatre would have received it respectfully; for that miscellaneous audience has now been trained to exercise reason, where other meetings express the dictates of passion or of preconceived opinion; and to appreciate not only the force of argument, but the value of experience. To your knowledge of the subject it was ready to render a deference which no dignity of station could there have commanded. You were heard as a man who has for twenty years, with the stimulus of personal interest, been watching practically the operation of "protection;" as the farmer of above 1000 acres of your own land, and a tenant of 2500 acres more, much of it being that inferior soil which is most thought to require "protection;" as not only one of the largest arable farmers in England, but a land-agent for properties comprising more than 200,000 acres in England, Scotland, and Ireland; and thus enabled, by extensive observation of its action upon proprietors and cultivators, to appreciate the real value of "protection;" and, as a gentleman whose evidence before the parliamentary committee on agricultural distress, in 1836, and whose assistance at agricultural meetings subsequently had been deemed of high importance to the cause of "protection,"—these facts, sir, rapidly intimated by Mr. Cobden when he introduced you to the meeting, would have sufficed to insure you its profound attention, had you been there for the purpose of reiterating your former opinions, and not for that of declaring that further reflection and experience had convinced you of their fallacy. In proportion to the strength of this just and proper feeling, was the gratification of the assembly at the manly adhesion to Free Trade of one who can truly affirm that "all that he has in the world is in land," and who comes forward to confess and repudiate his

long-cherished error, that the land needs any artificial enhancement by the legislature of the price of its products, to render its cultivation profitable, or secure the cultivators from injury by the world's competition.

You are, sir, in the honourable position of hearing what, considered simply as testimony, is perhaps of more weight and importance than that of any other witness yet called into court in this great controversy. Who should know, if not such a person as yourself? Whose opportunities have been ampler? Whose observation more extended? Whose position better for noting the influences of the system upon all classes concerned? And whose experience more decisive? It is your practice, I understand, when unable to let a farm, from the poverty of the soil or its being out of condition, to take it yourself of the proprietor; always on a twenty-one years' lease; to stock it well, farm high, and look for your returns, not immediately, but with eventual certainty. Such practice is the test of protection. It resembles those chemical agents which detect the presence and nature of substances that are obscured by their combination. The farms which you take in hand are the primary argument for "protection." They are its extreme case of necessity and expediency. Your practice takes the bull by the horns. You are a living proof of the superfluity of "protection," for your own personal knowledge in this course of action has made you a free-trader. We have a right to tell the world to listen to you as one who not merely reasons, believes, or speculates on the subject, but who knows. You have tried the *experimentum crucis*. You depose to facts. Supposing the two Houses of legislation personified as judges on the bench, your evidence should make them say to each other, "Brother, this case is at an end."

The weight of your testimony is in accordance with the soundness of your argumentation. Every farmer in the country should ponder your question, "Have the laws of protection been of any service to you?" Who of them can lay his finger on capital that has been realised through the operation of those laws? Where are the tangible results? What little farmer becomes a large one by means of the first Corn Law, and a small proprietor by means of the second Corn Law, and from that has grown to a large pro-

prietor by means of the present or third Corn Law? Where are the lucky persons? Never did echo more dolefully answer, "Where!" You may advertise for them in the *Farmers' Journal* or the *Mark-Lane Express*, they will not be forthcoming. The Humane Society, at its anniversary, parades around the dinner-table those who have been saved from drowning; were the Protection Society to parade the farmers whom its system has saved from difficulty, how many would it muster? What can be produced as its work beyond a bad rent-bargain? That, indeed, is its doing. In 1815, as you showed at the meeting, 80*s.* a quarter was guaranteed for wheat, and in seven years it was selling for 40*s.* In 1827 the new law promised 64*s.*, and in nine years 35*s.* was all that could be obtained. In 1841 the new law did not promise—Sir Robert Peel often implies and seldom promises—but it implied 56*s.*, and wheat is at 45*s.*; probably not yet at its lowest. What are all these facts but illustrations of the system as a provision for bad rent-bargains? If not its "being's end and aim," they are its inevitable result. They are all that protectionist farmers take by their motion. To this truth they will listen from you, sir; they will "lend you their ears," which they seem to think insecure within reach of manufacturers; tell it them again, I pray you, and again.

That "the more we extend our commerce the better will our produce sell," that "in any part of the country where we find manufactures flourishing and population increasing, there we find land and produce the most valuable," and that Free Trade in sugar and timber is an item of large advantage for the farmer to take into his account in the application of the general principle,—these are truths felicitously illustrated in your speech. You have shown thereby to the agricultural classes in what consists their real interest. Another thing you have done of yet higher importance. You have described and exemplified the spirit in which they should meet the rest of the community. You have pioneered their path towards a peaceful and honourable settlement of this agitation. The secret of such a settlement is all contained in your mode of following up your declaration of the necessity of extended trade: "Gentlemen, I say that it is necessary to do this; and I do not doubt that the landowners, tenants, and all classes, will join hand in hand in carrying

out so great a cause; that, like the phœnix springing from its ashes, shall we the landowners of England, and we the tenants of England, arise and show, by our determination and by our skill, our desire to do all we can to procure for the people of this country what is necessary for them to eat." That, sir, is what we ask, and all we ask. Produce as much as you are able, and do not bar our supplying the deficiency from other quarters. Let competition stimulate your efforts, and Free Trade complete the supply of our wants. Whatever bitterness of feeling may have been sometimes manifested, has arisen from the reaction of restrictions on the people's food. The present system obstructs their having "what is necessary for them to eat." Too many landlords and tenants also have evinced an apparent indifference to there being enough to eat. They support laws which tend to keep the supply below the natural demand. Fixing the price of produce has been their first, though vain, object; and the people's being well fed has sunk into at best a secondary consideration. Let agriculture frankly meet commerce on your principle, and there is an end of their animosity; they are at one for ever. Sir, your words tend to make Covent-Garden Theatre a "Conciliation Hall;" not for the repeal of a union between nations, but for the production of union between conflicting classes.

The noble effort you have made in publicly abjuring the error of a life, implies a previous influence of no little power upon your mind. Convictions deeply rooted and of long endurance are not reversed without a struggle. The fact of your conversion to the cause of Free Trade presupposes volumes of practical commentary upon the restrictive system. You must have seen its pernicious results in deteriorating the permanent worth of the vast properties for which you are the agent. Such deterioration must needs become visible to the agent before impressing itself on the mind of the proprietor; although he will speedily, if a wise man, avail himself of the knowledge and intellect which on other points he has found trustworthy. It is from agents that landlords must often learn their interests. And others besides yourself have doubtless witnessed such circumstances, affecting both landowner and tenant, as those which have acted on your mind. They have seen the injury to pro-

perty, on the one hand, and the gradual descent, on the other, towards the gulf of bankruptcy. Were land-agents to speak out, they would be the fittest chroniclers of the fate of tenant-farmers. They know how and why so many have been sold up and sent adrift on the world. The melancholy history of many a calamitous change must be preserved in their memories. It is for them to tell whether "protection" has made prosperity. They have now the example of speaking out what they know, of fairly describing what they see and feel, of the condition of tenantry and labourers; and may they do themselves and society the justice of following that example!

There is an Anti-Corn-Law Almanac, and too many of the days in its calendar are dark with the commemoration of suffering and riot, want and crime,—the terrible consequences of monopoly; but there shall be a white mark for the day when one so eminent as yourself in the agricultural interest came forward at a League meeting, amongst the first-fruits of conversion in your class, to herald that harvest of opinion when laws which are a universal injury shall be abolished by universal consent.

No. XXVIII.

To the Frequenters of the Religious "May Meetings."

May 3, 1845.

Christians!—In all your diversities of faith and forms, this month gives practical evidence of the extent to which you are animated by one spirit. It summons you from all parts of the country to your metropolitan gatherings—for missionary and other purposes—as the Jews went up of old to Jerusalem for their high festivals. You forget your minor differences, and seek the aid of Heaven for your common and paramount objects. The denominations to which you belong, and the localities from which you come, are almost as varied as the tongues which found harmonious

utterance on the day of Pentecost. Assemble in your multitudes, and hold your annual solemnity; but, while you ask the blessing from above upon yourselves, withhold not, I pray you, the blessing of your own sympathy and help from the poor, the needy, and the oppressed,—the victims of an unrighteous law that denies the labourer his hire.

The warfare against monopoly, waged by the Anti-Corn-Law League, is no mere sordid struggle for pecuniary advantage. This agitation is the result, with thousands, of the holiest principle. Their motives are in their bibles; their warrant is contained in the divine law; and their desire is expressed in the Christian prayer. They ask for the labourer his daily bread, by whomsoever or whereso-ever the corn may be grown of which that bread is made. They deny that the fruits of God's earth can be rightfully turned back from our shores while so many are starving, or be obstructed in their progress towards those who need them, by taxation levied for the profit of the English land-owner. They have learned that the ox that treadeth out the corn shall not be muzzled, and for the man that sows or reaps they require equal consideration. They demand justice. This is a Christian movement. It is a righteous and religious cause. It deserves a portion of your thoughts and care and efforts. Leave it not undone, whatever else you do. Be not deaf to the voice of truth and mercy. In your fulness of compassion for the unenlightened, remember those of whom numbers are your brethren and sisters in faith, and assert their claims and rights. Take advantage of your annual gatherings to show your accordance with the persevering efforts made to abate the monopoly in food. It is required of you in the name of that holy religion whose dominion you assemble to advance.

The food monopoly is the ally of ignorance, the occa-sion of crime, disease, and death. Souls are sacrificed by it at the shrine of Mammon. It has held up rents—the rich man's perquisite; and grinds down labour—the poor man's dependence. It keeps children from school, church, and chapel. It produces, by its artificial rise of prices, the multiplication of committals for crime, and the enlarged devastations of disease. It drives away from the house of prayer into the workshop or the gaol. The missionary to the poor complains that there seems a mockery in his men-

tion of "the bread of life." The middle classes are impoverished by its exactions. Their income-tax to the state is a light burden to their food-tax for the monopolists. It impairs their resources of charity and religion. What would go for the conversion of the heathen is grasped beforehand for the revenues of the aristocracy. The monopolist robs the treasury of the temple: and missionary plans are injured by Mammonite legislation.

Unshackled trade and commerce, by promoting the well-being and wealth of the industrious classes, would be propitious to every good work. In those classes it is that beneficent schemes find their best promoters and the sinews of their strength.

Unshackled trade and commerce would abate the selfish and angry feelings which repel classes from each other, and, by removing the bone of contention, allow peace and kindliness to revive. Were monopolist policy utterly abolished, what cause would there be for black and lowering looks between farmer and manufacturer? The law makes the discord.

Unshackled trade and commerce would promote the harmony of nations. They would extend a friendly intercourse to all regions of the earth. Prejudices would be mitigated, and a way for knowledge prepared in the wilderness. Peace, and the common use of one language, heralded the first rapid progress of Christianity. The British merchant may become a similar agent to the Roman warrior, and in a nobler spirit. Commerce is conquest and peace; and its universal language is no unapt preparation for the diffusion of knowledge, civilisation, and truth.

To whom have we a better right to look for adjusting the balance between different classes of society than to the professors of religion? You have power; it has been felt and recognised by politicians. It is your function to act as the conscience of the state. Slavery was abolished by your connivance. There is no novelty in presenting Free Trade as a religious question. Seven hundred preachers of the gospel, in conference at Manchester, denounced the Corn Laws, not only as an unwise policy, but as a moral offence. Still they exist. The bounty of Providence, by abundant harvests, has suspended some of the miseries they inflict, but has not changed their evil nature, or meliorated their malignant

tendency. The manufacturer is relieved, but the cultivator is depressed. Such are the alternations which can only terminate in the abolition of the system. Return not to your homes and families without doing something for that "consummation devoutly to be wished."

The heritage of man to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; the gift of earth's fruits, not to a class, but to the children of men; the prayer for daily bread; the protection, not of powerful wealth, but of helpless poverty; and the fearful anathemas on those who withhold the reward of the labourer, and oppress the needy, — these we know where to find in scripture, and he who runs may read. But exhortations to be independent of other countries, although they have food to sell, and our brethren sicken for want; admonitions to render food dearer, when it is always too dear for many to procure; precepts not to be thankful when bread is made cheap by its becoming plentiful; directions to destroy articles of human subsistence and comfort, or to render them unfit for use by filthy adulteration, —where do we find these in scripture? On what page of the sacred volume can monopoly point to such defilement? Artificial scarcity by abused legislation is not of God; it is a work of darkness; it is a practical abjuration and defiance of Christianity.

Let this matter intermingle, then, in due time, place, and form, with the great topics that bring you together. It is of the Christian family of thoughts and deeds. It "claims kindred there, and has its claims allowed." It belongs to the second of the two great commandments. It deserves the zeal, not yet extinct, that successfully asserted the brotherhood of the negro, and cannot be inert while those are wronged with whom we are identified by the ties of language, country, and religion.

What can you do? You can express opinion at your meetings, and find occasion of rebuke of monopoly as you did of slavery. You can renew, or commence, your contributions to the power which, in the League, has been raised for the destruction of this evil. You can assist that splendid exhibition of the varied power of bread-taxed industry about to be presented by the Free-Trade Bazaar. See there the skill in cunning workmanship with which Providence has endowed the people of this land; and ask

yourselves whether man, in his ill-judged selfishness, should be allowed to cripple, rob, and blight the faculties which were granted from above for individual and universal good. In each or all these ways you can bear your testimony against that tax on bread which is, in its influence and tendency, a tax on industry, on education, on the amicable intercourse of nations, and on the purest efforts of philanthropy.

The diversified products of skill and toil have some affinity with the varied flowers and fruits of the earth; like them, thriving best in the free and genial air; like them, indicative of mental, and even of moral attributes; and, like them, evincing the ample resources which Providence has opened for mutual service, and for universal good and enjoyment. You may derive lessons from the display which will harmonise with those you learn elsewhere, teach you "who is your neighbour," and how you can serve him; and remind you of the example of the good Samaritan, who passed not by on the other side when help could be rendered to the injured. And when it is thus practically shown what the people are, and can do, whose condition is so deeply affected by restrictive laws, how enduring their labour, how keen their ingenuity, how vast and varied their powers, and how worthy their works, the sight might well teach reflection and juster dealing even to monopoly itself, and bid it "go and sin no more."

No. XXIX.

To his Grace the Duke of Richmond (Second Letter).

May 10, 1845.

My Lord Duke,—Each of the wise men of Greece rendered himself memorable by a single saying; your grace, being the chief of our modern cunning men of "Grease," and seeing that no more apothegms can be imported from that quarter, is solicitous to take advantage of the non-

competition, and make a home-grown maxim for the market. Your success is splendid. The inspiration of protection was on your soul, when, on Monday evening, you interrupted Lord Dalhousie's laudation of the late financial measures by your never-to-be-forgotten ejaculation,

"We do not grow glass, and we do grow timber."

That sentence deserves to be the response of a monopolist litany. Its truth is undeniable, its purpose is characteristic, and its selfishness is most transparent. It should be the motto of that sordid section of speculators in legislative partiality which your grace represents. Do you grow the article? that is your first question, and then you are ready to legislate accordingly. Why, thou taxer of other people's trades for the advantage of thine own, thou duke of dirty dealings, thou Charlemagne of chandlers, wouldst thou have nothing cheap but what thou buyest? nothing dear but what thou sellest? Make out an inventory of all the items in which thou art interested; turbot for thy table, and greaves for thy grayhounds, may be untaxed,—"Love me, love my dog;" but the wheat and the salmon, the whisky, the wood, and the lard,—there lay it on. Let no foreign interloper show himself in rivalry with our shop. Tax him out, and tax us up. Your inventory should be a schedule to every budget; or your catalogue might be framed a fiscal catechism for the House of Lords. Block up every chink through which the light of hope may penetrate to pining millions. But for the Royal Oak of Boscobel there might never have been a Richmond: let its branches obstruct the remotest prospect of relief; success to wooden heads, and may no honest man be allowed a window in his breast, for

"We do not grow glass, and we do grow timber."

In stating the fact, that glass is not grown by English landowners, your grace has thrown light on the history and spirit of our taxation. Glass is a home manufacture, in which, with fair play, we should have surpassed the world. The duties upon it were so much extracted from industry and trade, to save the pockets of the tax-eating and tax-levying classes. There are as many glass-makers in the country as there are landowners; but the one class belongs

to those who have little to do with the taxes but to pay them, and the other to those who have little to do with the taxes but to enact them. From the latter part of the last century to 1834 the average duty on glass was quadrupled. In 1793 it was 8*s.* 8½*d.* per cwt., and in 1834 it was 35*s.* 7¼*d.* per cwt. During that period the population increased 60 per cent. The quantity taken for use did not increase in proportion. It did not increase at all. It ought to have increased from 407,203 cwts. to 663,740 cwts., and it diminished to 374,351 cwts. Such was the mode in which you or your class dealt with British interests and British industry. The worth of glass is in the labour and skill bestowed on the materials; they are cheap and abundant. For the healthiness of dwellings its use is of the first importance; as an article of export it goes mainly to our own possessions; more than half the trade it occasions is, including India, colonial. You love the labourer, my lord duke, and he needs it for the window of his cottage and the cucumber in his garden. I will not urge that, however; your grace is still so sore on the salmon that we will cut the cucumber. It is difficult to thread one's way amongst the articles, my lord duke, in which you deal and huckster. I was just going to mention Glenlivat. But, alas! the Scotch drink it out of wooden quaighs; this reduction of the duty will make them take to glasses; and you know,

"We do not grow glass, but we do grow timber."

What a shortsighted person you are! only a pettifogger, after all. Did you see Sir Robert Peel's glass balance-wheel? A curious thing, as delicately adjusted as his sliding scale. Your tenants will get cheaper watches, my lord duke; they will have a little more left to pay in rent. Watches will scarcely be worth taking. There will be less robbery on Goodwood race-course, my lord duke, and more custom for the gambling-booths. This invention is one of a thousand novel uses to which glass will be rapidly applied. Don't you see, my lord duke? More glassblowers will be born and bred, and they will want to buy something besides timber, which you grow. People who earn can pay. That is the sort of customers you need. And Peel's glass, like Banquo's, "shows you many more," whose

food you may tax if you can, but which untaxed will yield you an honest profit. Besides, what said Lord Dalhousie to your ejaculation? "With respect to glass, relief to the amount of 400,000*l.* had been afforded to the agricultural interest; and this was not merely a pounds-shillings-and-pence benefit, but it would tend to improve the moral and social condition of the labouring population." You do not grow morals, my lord duke, and your gratitude is not excited by this relief. You opposed the repeal of the auction duty, which only bears upon the comparatively poor; your own class having long ago secured its own exemption. Your coadjutor, Lord Winchelsea, "certainly does not regard with indifference the importation of salted meat from America." You and he grow pigs. You are "not indifferent" to the "meritorious labourer" having the chance of a bigger bit of bacon. No man is "indifferent;" only other folks are interested that he should get it, your lordships are interested in his not getting it. And then you have the face to come as a bold beggar upon the Consolidated Fund, for a portion of the county rates, which portion would be forthwith transmuted into rent, already from double to quadruple what it was fifty years ago. Now, reckon up the classes towards whom your opposition on the Auction Duty, Repeal Bill, and the Customs' Duties Bill is an act of hostility. Besides others, the list specially includes the peasantry and the tenants: it proves the utter selfishness of the whole proceeding. You are for all remission that will grow into rent; you are for no remission that will not grow into rent. No matter that the farmers must buy timber, no matter that the labourers must buy lard,—not being able to reach the price of butter. Do "we grow it"? that is all. If labourers were to live in houses of glass, and tenant-farmers fed on timber, it would be all the same; you would grudge the remission on glass, and grumble for greater protection to your trees; for

"We do not grow glass, and we do grow timber."

In the "grand old times," my lord duke, people did without glass. "Of old time," says Harrison's *Description of England*, 1584, "our country houses did use much lattice, and that made either of wicker [we grow osiers] or fine rifts of oak in checkerwise [we grow oak]. I read

also that some of the better sort, in and before the time of the Saxons, did make panels of horn [we grow horns], and fix them in wooden calmes [we grow timber]." But all this was changed by the cheapness and convenience of glass; and do you not think you are entitled to compensation? The selfishness of your class has impeded and limited the change which it could not prevent. You have taxed it back, and levied your tolls on the progress of civilisation. Your order was first chivalric, then luxurious, and has now sunk into sordidness. Pierre de Blois, who wrote in the twelfth century, complains that the horses of the knights were more frequently loaded with implements of gluttony and drunkenness than with arms fit for battle. "They are burdened," says he, "not with weapons, but wine; not with javelins, but cheeses; not with bludgeons, but bottles; not with spears, but spits." And what burdens now, not your horses but yourselves, when you go down to the House? The memory of what your lands do grow, and what they do not grow; of what you have to sell, and what you have not to sell; of what you wish to buy, and what you do not wish to buy; of what can—if bestowed on the tenant—be squeezed out of him as rent, and of what cannot be squeezed out of him as rent. A burden, my lord duke, not less unchivalrous than that which called forth the lamentations of Pierre de Blois.

Go to the Free-Trade Bazaar, and learn from that splendid exhibition a lesson of more wisdom, justice, and liberality than you have yet attained. See what industry can accomplish, and respect its rights. You will find none of your pitiful distinctions there. Venetian goblets will rest on slabs of British oak, and your own plantations may have furnished the framework in which glassy fibres have been woven into regal mantles. The hewers of wood and drawers —drinkers too—of water are not forgotten there, nor in the objects at which the League is aiming; neither are they dissociated from those who twine the filmiest silk, or fashion the sturdiest metals. British industry, with its energy and enterprise, its capital, skill, and taste, can work for the world, and requires the world for its remuneration. Go, my lord duke; and as the varied light falls on the varied products, blending them into the harmony of usefulness and beauty, be not particular in picking out what grew on

your own estates in Sussex or Argyleshire. Look beyond and above both. Think of the riches which Providence has stored up in nature, and of the faculties with which it has endowed humanity to render those riches subservient to common profit and enjoyment; nor turn away, sullenly muttering to yourself,

"We do not grow glass, and we do grow timber."

No. XXX.

To the Hon. C. P. Villiers, M.P., &c.

May 17, 1845.

Sir, — The free-traders of Great Britain are expecting your annual motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws with that full reliance upon your doing justice to their cause which you have earned by so many years of able and consistent advocacy. They await the repetition of your effort quietly, but not indifferently. That you should obtain a majority is not in their dreams; nor will your dividing in a minority darken their hopes. They know that the time is not yet, and they also know assuredly that it is coming. They look to see you at your post; and you will be there. An important duty is to be done; and it is a matter of course that you will discharge it faithfully and zealously. Meetings are not held, nor petitions forwarded, to strengthen your hands; for encouragement is known to be needless, and there is no discouragement to call for counter-action. The work goes on, noislessly and surely. The silence is that of mutual confidence which cannot be shaken, and of conscious power which cannot eventually fail.

Whether much progress, or little, or none at all, be made as to numbers, upon a division in the House of Commons, is a very subordinate concern. No great question is carried there by individual conversions. The margin of

independent and convertible members is too small to allow the transmutation of argument or persuasion. You speak, not for immediate impression, but for an ulterior result. Every triumphant debate helps forward the time when Free Trade must be consistently adopted by the government as the policy of the country. The altered tone of party leaders, on both sides of the House, is a surer mark of advance towards that period than any votes of individual members. Majorities will be forthcoming when they are required. The rats will run when the ship founders. Future Mackenzies will discover that they are voting for monopoly, because Free-Trade propositions are not sufficiently comprehensive. The men of majorities can eat dirt when they are bidden, and find "to-the-right-about-face" amongst the easiest of evolutions. You can afford to disregard visible movement towards a parliamentary majority. You are laying the rails on which any government that can be formed must consent to run, if it would long escape the danger of upsetting the coach.

One advantage attends this return of your annual motion; you will encounter opponents who have more thoroughly exposed themselves than in any former year. The name of "farmers' friend" is become a byword. Tenants and labourers see what their patrons are. The mask of "protection" has fallen from the features of Rent. Agricultural associations are angry debating societies. The world makes merry with Miles, laughs at lard, and takes Richmond to be another term for the ridiculous. All plausibility and coherence is gone from the cause of monoply. Its game is up of oppressing one class by duping another class. The last Corn Law has more rapidly falsified its promises than did preceding Corn Laws. Those who, as yet, fail to see what is wrong, bitterly feel that something must be wrong. There is talk on market-days of corn rents and leases. The phalanx of hostility which formerly presented itself is divided, disheartened, and full of mutual recriminations. One principle has been let slip, and no other principle has been laid hold of. You will only find a mob of sophisms opposed to your array of arguments. It is not in the nature of a chaos to be permanent: order must triumph over disorder. "Protection" has led agriculture into the confusion; but what can "protection" do

for its extrication? Free Trade, from high vantage ground, calmly watches the storm below, beholding, not an armament to be destroyed, but shipwrecked sailors to deliver.

Although no demonstrations of support are offered you in the form of meetings and petitions, yet free-traders are not idle. They are maturing a more efficient coöperation. They are experimenting on the degree of electoral power which the constitution has placed within their reach. One name on the registration list is worth many names at the tail of a petition. For the present, you and your coadjutors in the House of Commons represent multitudes who are only, but will not continue to be only, virtually represented. This is a better way of backing our friends than by mere words. "Speak, hands, for me," said Casca, as he struck down the ursurper while others were kneeling. "Speak, votes, for us," say the free-traders, while others are petitioning. The legal emancipation of industry must be won by the electoral emancipation of the industrious. Fagot votes have been made heretofore; but our votes will make the fagot that typifies the strength of union.

Another indication of the feeling that is with you in your repeated and untiring efforts may be seen in the bazaar at Covent-Garden Theatre. I pass over all other lessons taught by that extraordinary exhibition,—its displays of skill, taste, and industry, and its many pleadings on behalf of their rights whose works it represents! Take only this fact,—a most important one: it evinces determination. What a mass of contributions! What huge piles, yet unpacked, awaiting the clearing of the loaded stalls, and ready to fill that large space again and again! And from what a mass of contributors they come! Those contributors are of all classes,—followers of all occupations,—spread through all the gradations of society; from the wealthy, who give of their abundance, to the poor, whose mites show the contrast of disposition and of means. This municipal supply is the supplement of similar local efforts, and of repeated money contributions. The purchasers, moreover, act under the same motives as the contributors. Buying is another form of subscribing. Here is evidence of the earnestness of multitudes. No opposition can crush, nor any delay wear out, a spirit that shows itself in such manifestations. It has a strength of will that must prove resistless. The

people are determined on the destruction of monopoly. They pray for it, and they work for it; they give for it, and they buy for it; they devote to it their time, their money, and their goods; and they will have it. Else were there no laws of cause and effect in human action; no reasoning from the past to the future; no power in perseverance or in truth; and no guidance of a beneficent and impartial Providence.

We are at our posts as you, sir, are at yours; and, while putting our own shoulders to the wheel, we note with satisfaction how steadily you pursue the course you have marked out for yourself in parliament, undiverted either to the right hand or the left by any political or personal inducement. Your public career is identified with this great cause. You adopted it in its feebleness, and you are one with it in its might. Your name is inwoven into the record of the struggle, and will be emblazoned in the glory of the triumph. Compared with the pure fame which you will achieve, how worthless is the transitory power of party leaders, pursuing crooked paths, surrounded by suspicions, guided by no principle, and, even when they are the inconsistent agents of benefit to a nation, conquered into the good they do by better men, whose perseverance has made the expediency to which they succumb!

No. XXXI.

To Viscount Ingestre, M.P., &c.

May 24, 1845.

My Lord,—The renowned knight of the buck-basket exulted in being not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in other men. Your lordship and the Duke of Richmond rolled into one would constitute the Sir John Falstaff of Agricultural Protection. He makes maxims, and you cause the farmers to make them. To his grace we owe the memorable saying, "We do not grow glass, and we do grow timber;" while your lordship's pathetic inquiry of

what the landlords are to do without their tenants' money, elicited the pithy answer from a farmer at the late Staffordshire meeting, "Same as we do, my lord,—make shift."

Take this reply to heart, my lord. The farmers are not the only people from whom you are liable to hear it. You belong to a triumphant party. You helped to win the battle of monopoly at the last general election. The country is governed by a ministry of that party's making. You and they are dragged through the dirt by the creature of your own hands and voices. The Tariff and the Canada Corn Bill had the support of your votes. You are a unit in the majority of a premier who, according to your own description, "always maintains the strictest silence respecting measures which he has in contemplation; and it was not until the last moment that his supporters were made acquainted with ministerial propositions." And why should he tell you beforehand? It would only subject you to so much the more debasement. You must vote all the same. A consistent, thorough-going monopolist ministry is beyond your reach. The time is past for its possibility. The country cannot be so governed. Sir Robert Peel is your necessity. When his measures are ripe, you must eat the leek; but why nibble it before the cudgel is over your heads? No wonder you were so embarrassed at the meeting as to decline to "enter further into your reasons for giving those votes." Doubtless you have often looked wistfully at your brother protectionists in the House of Commons, to see if they had any spare arguments or apologies,—your lordship is alert at catching the windfall of a rotten argument, even in a Peeblesshire orchard,—but your compeers have nothing for you. "The hungry sheep looks up, and is not fed." Were your pitiful appeal made to the cabinet, "perhaps you would wish the landlords to be entirely without" reasons; "if so, what are we to do?" The farmer's answer would be all you would get: "Same as we do, my lord,—make shift."

Why can you not look a little further into the real difficulty of a monopolist policy? A repeal of the Tariff and of the Canada Corn Bill you very justly treat as an impossibility. What makes it an impossibility? No difficulty of obtaining a ministerial majority, were Sir Robert Peel to propose such repeal to-morrow: your class would be only

too glad to walk at his heels in the division. Nor would their seats be endangered with the constituents who returned them at the last election. The ground of the impossibility is deeper than this. A politician dares not do many things in which he would be sure of the support of a majority. He cannot disregard public opinion and ascertained public interests. These are the motive-power to your monopoly-created minister. These make him boastful, even before your faces, of what he has already done for Free Trade. These will make him go further in the same direction; and they will oblige you to "make shift." There is no help for it. He may keep his own secret as to particular measures, but you may see their certain character and tendency by only opening your eyes. And you cannot make another ministry. Any man with the least pretensions to statesmanship will serve you the same. He must, my lord. You are doomed to eat your words. Joining Protection Societies will not avail you. The future on which you draw will not accept. Sir Robert Peel has not been, as you say, "deceived in the results of the Canada Bill;" nor you either; nor any body else. But you deceive yourself if you dream of stopping there. You must go on and "make shift."

And why should you not, my lord? As protection laws have not prevented the fall of wheat to 45*s.* the quarter, why should they prevent the reduction of rents to what they were when wheat was 45*s.* the quarter before? The farmers begin to tell you that you must "try it." They have right and reason on their side. Your only stated objection is, that the reduction would not be large enough to help them. They are not satisfied with that logic. It was urged that they could not go on as they are for three years longer; that they pay rent out of their capital; that the present race of tenants must become extinct. Perhaps some landlords will think it may be replaced by another; to be deluded, fleeced, and ruined in like manner. This game must be nearly up, whatever becomes of rents.

There is a bill before the House of Commons for facilitating the enclosure of all the waste lands in the country. Fifteen millions of acres of arable land to be added to that already in cultivation, and the produce of which, we are told, cannot be sold at a remunerating price! The land-

lords who support this measure are subjecting the tenantry to a more formidable competition than that of the foreigners. You bring the competition home to their barn-doors. The produce of every new-tilled acre competes in the market with that of the old acres cultivated by the existing tenantry. You are preparing for the cultivation of new land at the moment when you whine over the prospect of old land going out of cultivation. What transparent hypocrisy! Thus it is that you protect your tenants from rivalry. The wheat of this new soil will pay no duty; it will be subject to no peculiar cost of transport; it will pay rent;—and that seems the chief thing about which some landlords care.

Do you read, my lord, of the Scotch clearings now in progress?—the unhousing of the peasantry in Glen Calvie and other localities, to perish on the hill-side, and make room for larger sheep-walks, without any poor upon them? You will be made to hear of them, my lord; for the *Times* has its correspondent there. This is a landlord's war upon an honest and self-supporting peasantry—a war of which rent is to be the prize. The cruelty of these clearings will not pass so quietly now as in former times. They will be regarded in their true light—as a war of extermination against the peasantry. There are, indeed, other countries for them; they may fly, if they can, to the colonies. And what awaits them there? Monopoly is at war with our own colonies. The petition adopted by the Staffordshire meetings treats the colonists as foreigners. So did the majority of the House of Commons when it rejected Mr. Hutt's motion. Competition with the colonies is identified with competition with the foreigner. You drive them out for the sake of rent; and then, for the sake of rent, you pursue them with restrictions to Australia. Here, they are cleared off that the soil may be rendered more profitable; there, their expatriated industry renders the soil more profitable; and you tax its produce in addition to the heavy natural tax of transit. Yet these people are the labourers whom you so profess to love; and these colonies, however distant, are part and parcel of the empire. Their agriculture is British agriculture. And you wage war on it and them. The protection you support, my lord, is manifestly neither that of agriculture nor of the cultivators.

Ever since the peace there has been a succession of attempts, by the landlord class, artificially to keep up prices to the war standard. The attempts have only so far succeeded as to keep up rents, while prices have been subjected to ruinous fluctuation. The promise of every Corn Law has been falsified. Each has held good for the tenant's bargain with the steward, and has held good for nothing else. You cannot wonder that the system is coming into universal odium. Some farmers still cry for "a little more duty," forgetting that much more duty was equally a deception. Others see that a little less rent would be a much surer relief than a little more duty. You were wiser to try that course than to persist in the perversion of legislative power to the supposed interests of a class. I say, supposed interests; for it is only the nominal landowner, whose estates are mortgaged, that would really find himself the worse for Free Trade. Landed property must rise in value with the progress of national prosperity. The *bonâ fide* proprietor of land would be benefited. As for the rest, your friend the farmer tells them what it is their duty to do —"Same as we do, my lord,—make shift."

No. XXXII.

To the Ladies who attended the Stalls in the Free-Trade Bazaar.

May 31, 1845.

Good, true, and brave, in their gentleness and delicacy, are the women of England. Historians have chronicled their virtues, poets have sung of their loveliness, and every form of suffering has borne witness to their charity. In the annals of literature and art they have won an honourable place, and the hourly enjoyments of the household are their unrecorded but blessed creation. Whatever fascination may be conceded to the beauty of other climes and races, it is something better than the mere partiality of patriotism

which says of them, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

The duty and beneficence of woman, like that of man, must adapt itself to times and circumstances. The work of the day is to be done; and the wants of mankind indicate the service to be rendered to mankind. We are continually invited to new regions of useful endeavour. The assistance already rendered by the women of England to the Anti-Corn-Law League, in various ways and on various occasions, demonstrates their perception of the cruel injustice and demoralising tendency of monopoly. They feel that where privation is to be mitigated, or despair and guilt are to be prevented, there it is woman's mission to interpose. Hence her presence at the meetings of the League, her contributions to its funds, her canvassing for the material for its bazaars, and her personal services, formerly at Manchester and now in this metropolis, to complete the success of these experiments and enhance their importance, not only in the augmentation of funds, but also in relation to those higher objects of public economy, knowledge, morals, and progress, which identify themselves with the end for which the League is constituted.

Your seventeen days at Covent-Garden Theatre will long be remembered. But it is not enough gratefully to acknowledge their importance, to recognise the service rendered by all of you during portions of that time, and the energy of those who returned each morning to the arduous task. There is a wider and deeper feeling which also requires expression. You have opened and led the way in a new path of female beneficence. You have combined in a public agitation for the redress of wrong, without any compromise of gentleness or grace. You have mingled in business and bustle, refining them by your interposition. In sales and bargains you have been "sisters of charity." In the shape of shopkeeping-women you have shown the spirit of angels of mercy. You have stooped to conquer; and, in doing the work of an inferior station in society, have risen, and raised your sex to a moral height above all station. No other agency could have achieved what you have done for human welfare. In this same cause, some "post o'er land and ocean without rest;" but "they also serve who only stand and wait;" and

they enhance the sanctity of more excursive service. You impart a purer and nobler character to the efforts of others, be they orators, writers, or statesmen. Your active sympathy is a halo of sacredness around their toils. The thousands who thronged the theatre felt, perhaps unconsciously, a new sentiment of respect in your presence. They had a vague sense that your humble occupations, and the principles which placed you there, were a development of power and beauty; and the heart bowed before you. This will not pass away with the closing of the Bazaar. A new and better element henceforth blends in reformatory struggles. The influence of woman has a new, a purer, and a loftier enthronement. You have made the stalls of a bazaar not less holy than the stalls of cathedrals.

It is for this you deserve the blessings of humanity. You have come to its aid daringly; but with that boldness which purest feelings and purposes inspire, and which, therefore, cannot err, even in demeanour. The ribaldry which oppression has often hired for its ruffian work stood rebuked before you. Amongst yourselves, and those who gathered round you, were many who, politically, religiously, or socially, are parted by stern barriers. For the time, at least, these barriers were annihilated. Every heart beat kindly, for all breathed the same moral atmosphere. It was the gleam of a renovated age, such as poets tell of in the past, and Utopians in futurity. Oh, you have done a good work; but one that, while its memory will brighten your future lives, developes a power that extends over them great and solemn responsibilities.

Little of statesmanship or philosophy can there be in the man who should regard the Free-Trade Bazaar as an idle show, or merely a money-getting contrivance. It has a profounder significance. Ladies zealously serving at stalls, amid Gothic adornments of scenic art,—those stalls richly furnished by spontaneous contributions in every department of industrial ingenuity,—tell of the commercial spirit having succeeded to the heritage of feudal splendour; of its having allied itself with munificence, taste, and intellect; and how the

> "Store of ladies, whose bright eyes
> Rained influence and adjudged the prize"

at knightly tournaments, while the millions pined in

unpitied vassalage, are now the herald genii of Providence, pointing to a coming period of impartial justice, and therefore of universal good and prosperity. The funeral eulogists of the age of chivalry saw plainly that a commercial age must follow; but they deprecated its coarseness, sordidness, and rapacity. Vain apprehensions! There might have been something in them, had not commerce been forced into a hard struggle for its rights. Cast into the furnace, it found there the fires of purification. Its turn has come to win and wear "the spoils of vanquished time." Such changes are never retrogressive. In each, the real good of the past is retained and enhanced. Each change is a struggle between departing and coming principles,—a struggle to qualify the new power in the ascendant for promoting the progress of mankind, and confirming the next step in the march of civilisation. People talked of "magic" in the transformations which the theatre itself underwent; it was the magic that promises a new and nobler form to society, by the invocation:

> "Spirits of beauty, spirits of power,
> Up to your duty—now is the hour."

Many a one of you, maid or matron, has doubtless gone, simply and cheerfully, to her unwonted task, day after day,—smiling in fatigue, carefully setting forth her wares, sharing the excitement of the scene, counting proceeds which were her addition to the common treasury, and with only an indistinct feeling that there was something in all this besides the eventual good to labouring millions, much beyond the fancy fairs of superficial charity. It is the looker-on who sees what is doing; and to him the scene is full of suggestiveness. But that indistinct feeling will grow into clear thought, as it has with others of you; and these passing days will indicate their relation with years, generations, centuries, of the past and future. In that contemplation you will perceive the importance of your own work. You will see, also, that its fitting acknowledgment is not in light phrases of meaningless praise, not in the commonplace flatteries of gallantry, but in serious and earnest words, and "thoughts that wander through eternity."

No. XXXIII.

To the Members of the House of Commons.

June 7, 1845.

GENTLEMEN,—On Tuesday next it will again devolve upon you to discuss and decide whether food from abroad shall be freely admitted, for supplying the wants and remunerating the industry of the people of this country. Allow one of the many to entreat your calm and serious consideration of the course to be adopted on that occasion. I do not appeal to you in your collective capacity, nor as members of either of the great political parties; but as men who are conscious of the claims of truth and justice, and who feel the moral responsibility inseparable from the possession of legislative authority. Though I may only tell you "that which you yourselves do know," let me not, I pray you, be therefore unheeded. It is on your own thoughts that I rely; my purpose being to hold up a mirror wherein you will perceive what portion of those thoughts is most distinctly and strongly reflected in other minds. On that portion I would fix your attention, that you may estimate its relative weight, and its claim to preponderate in the practical direction of your conduct as legislators on the question again submitted for your decision.

Could taxation upon food be treated as an isolated topic, there would probably be little difference of opinion or of action. Who would ever dream of stopping a cargo of corn coming as payment for manufactured goods from a New-York merchant to a Liverpool merchant, if this were "the be-all and end-all" of the transaction? It would stand on the same ground as any other case of honest barter, with which a third party has no business to interpose. The right is apparent; and as such exchange presupposes the wants, thus mutually supplied, of food in the one locality and of manufactures in the other, the advantage and humanity of the transaction are apparent also. Hence few of you profess hostility towards Free Trade "in the abstract." The opposition arises, not from the essence, but from the adjuncts and accidents, of the question. Considerations of national policy, of class interests, of party tactics, of public revenue, or of temporary expediency, surround and smother

the main question, and determine many of you to vote, for the present at least, against the untaxed interchange of products which, whether in England or in America, and whether from the land or from the loom, are alike obtained by the application and the exercise of industry.

There is, then, gentlemen, in favour of Free Trade, that clear and prompt decision which results from the most elementary moral principles. The antagonistic considerations are all only different forms of a temporary expediency. They are questions of "how far" and "how long." Sooner or later, they must wear out. Are they not worn out already? Is not the time come for all such considerations to yield, when once the question is commonly mooted on the higher ground? The case for Corn-Law repeal is simple and complete. You concede the right. It cannot be disproved. It has laid firm hold on the public mind. Against it are only disputed facts, and motives of a subordinate character. Every year has made them less facile and less plausible; every year makes them less satisfactory as a reason for delay. The dying expediency cannot resist the ever-living truth. The time is ripe for decision. It must be so with all who become conscious of only balancing between a class or party convenience and a principle. That consciousness is itself a signal for dismissing the idea of further procrastination.

Party ties extend not to such questions as this. Like that of slavery, it is beyond their limit. It disregards the customary division, and creates a demarcation of its own. There is always a suspension of party when men are in earnest on a philanthropic object. The measures which Lord Ashley has made his own for protecting women and children, and lightening the hours of labour, are irrespective of Toryism and of Whiggism. He asks not whether they promote or embarrass the party policy of one or the other; similar disregard is asked of you—of every thoughtful, just, and humane man in the House—on this paramount topic of the supply of food for the population. He will not compromise his generous impulses and beneficent purposes for the minor objects of party; be you as uncompromising on a matter which is not only more momentous, but which must impede, by its delay, all other projects for meliorating the condition of the people. All

are compromised, endangered, perhaps sacrificed, so long as this is unsettled.

Lord John Russell, who has declared that "protection is the bane of agriculture," still clings to a fixed duty. Sir Robert Peel, who justly boasted of having done more for Free Trade in ten months than the Whigs did in ten years, still upholds the last modification of the sliding scale. Party leaders are not the best judges of the fitting time for great measures of the description now proposed. They look too much to parliamentary strength. They are cautious of risking the adherence of any great section of their supporters. They overstand the time. Sir Robert Peel has committed this error more than once; to say nothing of similar mistakes on the part of his opponents. Public agitation is the child of ministerial procrastination. The too-late measure brings weakness, which, at an earlier period, would have been the source of strength. At such junctures it is for followers to lead their leaders. They can render no better service than by thus stepping out in advance. When Tory free-traders speak plainly, Tory protectionists will capitulate. The position of Sir Robert Peel requires this, from those of his party who share in his convictions, and who are unfettered by his ties to the antagonistic portion of his followers. They must say for him—he cannot so well say it for himself—that the time is come. If they announce "the hour," he will show "the man." And, however long postponed, by a policy which thus far may find some palliation in the peculiar circumstances of his party, but which now has reached its proper boundary, a proud day will it be for him which shall—though by voting against him in the first instance—consign his name to history as the first Free-Trade minister of the British Empire.

Gentlemen, it is believed there are many of you who clearly see how this agitation must end. You are prepared for the only termination of which it is capable. Your decisive conduct now would avert many of the evils which must attend that termination if it be still postponed. The leaders of the House might not be outvoted by your support of Mr. C. Villiers's motion; but they would be taught that the game of compromise was up. Nothing would remain but to provide decently for the funeral of "Protection." It would become defunct by your independent

action. Sir Robert Peel would soon do the rest. The turmoil out of doors would be allayed. You would have no more votes and words to swallow down on some future occasion. The rapidly growing distrust of all political professions and integrity would be checked. The farmer would know on what terms to treat with his landlord. There would be a closing of the gulfs, some widening and others newly opening, between different classes of society. And above all, that awful revulsion would be averted, that recurrence of worse than Paisley horrors, which perhaps a single bad harvest, certainly two bad harvests in succession, must bring upon the country. Strong-nerved must he be who dares to look that calamity in the face. Providence has granted an interval of breathing-time, but left the future discernible without the gift of prophecy. Is it wise to wait? Is it right to devolve your responsibility on Sir Robert Peel, or on any party leader? Can you so deliver your own consciences, in the sight either of God or man? You hold the balance. Your votes may be in a minority, but the impression of your conduct will be not less decisive than any majority. But if you sacrifice this great question to a supposed and paltry political expediency, you cripple Sir Robert Peel in the practical application of his avowed principles; you provide for the not very distant breaking-up of your party; you prolong a growing agitation; you expose the country to fearful chances of discontent, distraction, and confusion; you neglect the most favourable opportunity of settling a question alike urgent and momentous; you tamper with that which is highest and purest in your own minds, and postpone to "a more convenient season" your full conformity with the sacred duties and solemn responsibilities of legislation. These are not words of course, or topics of rhetorical persuasion. Their reality is felt by him who writes them; who feels them in common with the million to whom he belongs; and who laments the inadequate power of expression to transfer that feeling from his own mind to yours. No petitioners ever humbly prayed your honourable House with half the earnestness with which you are now individually besought to discard all fear and favour, all party ties or petty expediency, and to vote for the free supply of a nation's food, and the free exercise of a nation's industry.

No. XXXIV.

To the Members of the House of Commons (Second Letter).

June 14, 1845.

GENTLEMEN,—My last week's letter had especial reference to those among you who generally support the present administration, but whose personal convictions are believed not to be in favour of continued restrictions upon the supply of food for the people. I endeavoured to show you that the time had come for giving distinct expression to those convictions, and that Mr. Villiers's annual motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws afforded the appropriate opportunity. The petition has been partly granted, and partly refused. The minority remains as it was; the majority exhibits a decrease of no less than seventy-four votes, in addition to the decrease last year of fifty-three votes. At this rate two years must witness the extinction of the Corn Laws. You, gentlemen, could have saved us those two years of agricultural confusion and manufacturing agitation. Was it too much to expect of you that, instead of "expressive silence," you would have taken the bolder course of more expressive voting? Must there be a sliding scale in parliamentary conduct? Is the intermediate step of absence from the division an essential preliminary to the transfer of the majority? So it appears; and that you have done thus much, to so decisive an extent, demands its due acknowledgment.

And now allow me to remind you of the new position in which you are placed by the late discussion and division. Monopoly, which you allow to retain a majority, although you retire from the ranks of that majority, is stripped of all its excuses and pretensions. Sir Robert Peel has scarcely left a rag upon its nakedness. One after another, he trampled with remorseless heel upon the pleas by which your former votes were vindicated. He demolished his own sophisms as unsparingly as those of other people. High prices have nothing to do, he says, with high wages. If permanent, he affirms them to be a disadvantage to the industrious classes. There goes the ground for some scores of votes annually. Incumbrances on estates, and the pe-

cuniary obligations or interests of a class, are next repudiated as a reason for the law. There goes the ground for another batch of votes. Then "the hope to make ourselves entirely independent of foreign supply is out of the question." A forest of support for monopoly is levelled by that blow. In short, all principle whatever is abandoned. The mischievousness of the system is confessed by most distinct implication. "The gradual abatement of purely protecting duties" is declared to be the policy of the premier. And the only question is how to arrive at what is broadly acknowledged to be "a better condition of society, and the establishment of better principles."

The etiquette of Sir Robert Peel's position prevented his voting with Mr. Villiers; unless he had done so, it was scarcely possible for him to go greater lengths than he did. He left not a syllable to be pleaded for the Corn Laws beyond the bare fact of their existence. They do not exist for the labourer; they ought not to exist for the landlord; and adequate home supplies of food, their professed object, are not only beyond their power, but an absolute impossibility. Gentlemen, you judged rightly that you could not vote against Mr. Villiers after such a vote from the premier. Only an official person, or the voluntarily blindest of blind followers, could have done that. It was no speech to catch votes. Sir Robert Peel knows too well how to handle the net and line for it to have been so intended. He spoke, gentlemen, as your representative. He excused his absent friends. He showed cause for this wholesale secession from the ranks of monopoly. It would not have amounted to a rebuke had you been present and divided on the other side.

It is difficult to understand what are to be the degrees in that gradual abolition which is announced as the ministerial policy. The only conceivable gradations are a fixed duty or another Corn Law, with a sliding scale upon a lower pivot. But these expedients are both discountenanced by Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham. A third is scarcely within the compass of human ingenuity. All are liable to the fatal objection of their temporary employment being previously understood. The term "gradual" is deceptive. Ministers talk of graduation, and mean delay. They do not propose to divide the descent into minute

steps, but to procrastinate the one step a little longer. What will be gained by this delay?

What we lose by it is evident. We forego the opportunity of finally settling this question in a period of comparative quiet and prosperity. We risk its compulsive settlement in a period of scarcity, alarm, and comparative confusion. Did Sir James Graham read the first sentence of Burke's *Thoughts on Scarcity* before he cited that work? —it is well worth bearing in mind: "Of all things, an indiscreet tampering with the trade of provisions is the most dangerous, and it is always worst in the time when men are most disposed to it,—that is, in the time of scarcity." Yet, for the chance of this worst of times, he would have us wait. Burke concludes as he began: "My opinion is against an over-doing of any sort of administration, and more especially against this most momentous of all meddling on the part of authority—the meddling with the subsistence of the people." The question is now of ceasing legislatively to meddle with the subsistence of the people. And the argument against commencing interference is not less strong against continuing that interference until the time of scarcity may come. Every syllable of self-gratulation in which Sir Robert Peel indulged as to the state of the country since his Corn Bill passed is a reason for prompt adjustment. These are golden months, if not moments, for the purpose. The contingencies of another harvest are fast approaching. They defy human calculation. If they turn out unfavourably, will you not bitterly reproach yourselves that your conduct was not more decided? And what is gained should the result be favourable, and the fields be again laden with abundance? The cry of agricultural distress will swell louder, and the embarrassments and entanglements of the question will be worse than ever.

Sir Robert Peel has left very undefined certain "peculiar and special relations," which he says have grown up under the present unsound system. What these may be it is difficult to divine. Not the family settlements of Knatchbull notoriety; for he distinctly throws them overboard. Not the connection formed by leases between landlord and tenant; for leases are the exception, and not the rule; nor can it be otherwise till the provision trade is allowed its free and natural course. Not the expensive style of living

into which the notion of high rents secured by act of parliament may have seduced the landowners; for that interpretation, too, is refuted by another portion of the speech. It is "something which does not rest merely on pecuniary considerations." It is a "moral relation." A moral relation constituted by monopoly! A friend-and-fathership of farmers, which would be desecrated by honest dealing towards the rest of the community! Make the most, gentlemen, of this shadowy reason for delay; catch it if you can, and ascertain its power; and pity the straits to which the premier must have been reduced when he evoked it from the unsubstantial regions of its abode.

The whole speech is a cry for help, and you are the only people who can help. Unless you come to the rescue, it must be sought for, and it will be sought for, in a new parliament. Cannot you take a hint—and one given so plainly, too? Sir Robert Peel is determined to proceed with the destruction of protective duties, and the practical establishment of the Free-Trade principle. His difficulty, declared in express terms, is the "necessary caution for the purpose of insuring its general acceptance and stability." You can materially lessen that difficulty. Something you have done. The session, far as it has advanced, will yet afford opportunities for your doing something more. The course may be cleared for Sir Robert Peel against next year. Your absence has encouraged his progress. Desert him not at this critical point. One direct demonstration, and the work is done. It is due to him, due to yourselves, and now more than ever. It is needless to add that I deem it, above all, due to the country. By silence and absence you have won applause and gratitude. Come forward to cut short the dreary and perilous season of delay, and you will win the blessings of millions.

No. XXXV.

To the Electors of Exeter.

July 5, 1845.

GENTLEMEN,—You have now an opportunity for contributing towards the settlement of a question which deeply and permanently affects the interests of the community. There is but one great national subject on which your votes, at the approaching election, can have any important influence,—that of Free Trade. By returning a representative in favour of its principles, you will facilitate the final disposal of the Corn Laws. And such is the peculiarity of your position, that this is the only thing you can do. To accomplish this, or neglect it, is all the alternative before you in the exercise of your franchises.

Political questions, in the usually restricted sense of the expression, there are none to be submitted for your verdict. No portion of the constitution is either assailed or to be defended. The war of Whig and Tory has subsided, scarcely leaving a shadow of its struggles, or an echo of its uproar. The House of Commons only divides upon details, never upon principles; but details are rather for the consideration of representatives than of electors. For you there is little, if any thing, to vote upon except Free Trade.

The scope is still more narrowed—it is only one of time. Votes are thrown away if directed towards the permanence of what is called "protection." Corn Laws have been a series of experiments; each in succession has injured the trade, deceived the farmer, and been superseded by some further modification. The present law has given as little satisfaction as any of its predecessors. By common consent it is "the last of its race;" its own father claims for it no finality; it only stands till the breath of the constituencies shall please to puff it down.

What good is the prolongation of this precarious existence to any human being?—to farmer or trader, landlord or tenant, employers or employed, man, woman, or child? Settlement is the want of all. The law only serves to keep

every thing else precarious, like itself. There is no basis for bargains, rent has no prospective rule, and the benefit of leases is in abeyance. Commerce is doomed to contingency. For the price of food, there is the constant fear of fluctuation. It is the obvious interest of all that this uncertainty should cease. Restore their natural security to the enterprises of industry and the calculations of prudence. At present ruin is tossed from class to class, like a shuttlecock, of which good and bad harvests are the battledores,—sport only for demons.

Help, electors of Exeter!—help to terminate speedily this disastrous uncertainty. There is no impediment in your path, whatever be your politics. Neither of the great party leaders will be damaged by the return of a free-trader. Lord John Russell declares "protection" to be the bane of agriculture. Sir Robert Peel affirms his whole policy to be "the gradual abatement of purely protecting duties." The choice of a protectionist will turn neither of them to a different policy. It would weaken the ministry, yet not strengthen the opposition. It would be a sheer waste of electoral power, a preference for doing nothing and being nothing,—the exit of Exeter from the scene of parliamentary procedure.

No individual inherits the claims upon you of that personal interest which worthily attended the talents and virtues of your late lamented representative. They are buried in his grave. The loss of an eminent man is best supplied by the assertion of a great principle. General Briggs is before you, identified with that of Free Trade. He is identified thereby with the policy which our ablest writers have advocated, and our ablest statesmen have adopted. The standard writers of political economy—those who have made it a science by sound philosophy and elaborate statistics—are unanimous. In the legislature their principles have descended from Burke to Grenville, and so through Canning and Huskisson to the present generation; a noble legacy, only needing popular aid to arrive at their practical completion. The work is before you; and what is there which should turn you aside from your appointed task?

There are, it seems, people absurd enough to talk of "nomination" and "dictation," simply because General

Briggs is identified with those of us who, in Exeter as well as in London and elsewhere throughout the country, are in "league" to obtain, if we can, freedom of trade in corn and all other legitimate articles of traffic, for the benefit of industry and the alleviation of distress. Electors of Exeter, it is not "besieging," but "beseeching," that we approach you on this occasion. We ask you, for your own sakes as for ours, not to sanction the prolonged fluctuations and evils of an artificial monopoly in food. We pray you, not to enable, by the exercise of your franchise, the present system to go on harassing the farmers until bad harvests bring back starvation upon the crowded manufacturing population. Townsman or stranger, only give us one more voice in parliament against that awful prospect, and, whosoever it may be, we shall be petitioners as gratified as any that have ever received the boon they asked from legislative supremacy. Those amongst you who think with us, regard the character, talent, experience, and principles of General Briggs as marking him out for the purpose. But all that we want is relief from taxation on food, and from restriction on industry. Give us that, wherever the man of your choice may dwell, and by whatever name he may call himself,—Conservative or Whig, Tory, Radical, or Independent. Give us that, and we are content. Have we not a right, as fellow-countrymen, to ask thus much of you? We petition you to play the part of the Good Samaritan, and pour balm into the wounds inflicted by a pernicious monopoly. Priests may talk about "strangers" in such a case; of you we hope for the manifestations of his spirit who was "neighbour to him that fell among thieves."

Already the most distant of us are grateful to those of you whose zealous exertions are put forth for freedom of trade and abundance of employment, for steady prices and remunerated labour, for food in plenty and the prosperity of all classes. Who may be gratified and served by your choice of Sir J. Duckworth we know not; but millions will hail with satisfaction the aid you will render to the only true and sound policy of the British empire, by placing General Briggs in the honourable position of Free-Trade member for Exeter in the House of Commons.

No. XXXVI.

To the Electors of Exeter (Second Letter).

July 12, 1845.

GENTLEMEN,—You have returned, as your representative in parliament, a very respectable person, who has property in your neighbourhood, and who did not "ask for your votes on the principle of Free Trade," nor on any other principles, so far as appears from his speeches and addresses. Your new member is not pledged to oppose Sir Robert Peel should he introduce measures for the further abolition of import duties, or for the national establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland. He is not pledged to any thing but the simple fact for which you have chosen him,—that he is a very respectable person, of local property and influence. "Long live he so, and long live you to think so!" Why you should merely on such grounds make him a legislator is a mystery to all men out of Exeter.

As to the question of Free Trade, your votes are thrown away. You have not helped to decide that it shall be, or shall not be; you have only helped not to decide that it shall be at present. Sir J. Duckworth declines the principle, but not the practical application of the principle, should it be attempted by the present ministry. "He would not object to the reduction of duties which he found recommended by those who were intrusted with the conduct of state affairs, with collecting the revenues of the country, and with providing that the national income and expenditure balanced each other. He would be the last person who would desire to interfere with any reduction of duty thus rendered expedient." So far, so good. When Sir Robert Peel makes his next move in our favour, Sir J. Duckworth will step out after him. There is something original in his professions and plan of action. We have had free-traders "in the abstract" who were hostile to Free Trade in detail. Your member is friendly to it—Peel consenting—in the detail, but hostile to it in the abstract. Others oppose the practice and laud the prin-

ciple. His antagonism is to the principle, and not to the practice. His politics are best represented by a vulgar fraction, of which Free Trade is the numerator and Sir Robert Peel the denominator. He is for Free Trade divided by Peel. Algebraically, J. D. $=\frac{\text{F.T.}}{\text{P.}}$. Should the premier continue to approximate until he quite comes up to the principle, then he will be for Free Trade—as he is for the Constitution—"in its integrity." If such a man was just what you wanted, you must be very lucky to find him ready made in your neighbourhood. And it was not upon the cards that you should return an intelligent and consistent advocate—or opponent—of a great principle; there may be little to complain of in the neutralisation and stultification of your choice.

The originality of your member's politico-economical creed extends to the language which he selects for its profession. He would have "protection" rebaptised by the name of "adjustment." "In his opinion, the duties which had been designated as 'protective' should be called 'adjusting duties,' because they were intended to compensate for the liabilities and burdens of a peculiar nature which the land of this country bore. His desire at the present moment was to maintain those adjusting duties to which the agricultural interest was justly entitled, and no more." Suppose, then, it should turn out that the land has no "peculiar burdens;" in that case, Sir J. Duckworth is for the total repeal of the Corn Laws. Suppose it should appear that the "peculiar burdens" are overrated; in that case Sir J. Duckworth is for the reduction of the "adjusting duties." In either case, he is bound to ascertain what those burdens are. There can be no adjustment without knowing the amount of pressure. If the peculiar burdens be only a humbug, the adjusting duties should be a humbug also to trim the balance. Can any person "locally connected with your city" decide how much, in one scale, will exactly counterpoise an unknown weight in the other scale? Do your tradesmen deal thus with their customers? Are their silks meted by an unmeasurable yard, and their groceries sold by an indescribable weight? The landlords will not tell us their burdens. The anti-free-traders in the House of Commons vote against any revelation of their nature and

extent. They keep their own secret. Doubtless they have good reasons. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* Were the question of two horses to carry weight in a race, we know how the Jockey Club would treat any pretended adjustment while one party adhered to a similar suppression of the truth.

Grant, for argument's sake, that the class which commands the taxing power in this country—the landlord class—has laid much too large a proportion upon its own shoulders. Would not the simplest adjustment be to take it off? We have a property and income tax for the very purpose of relief from other burdens deemed unjust and inexpedient. Why resort to the clumsy expedient of unjustly taxing the consumer because the producer is said to be taxed unjustly? Sir J. Duckworth has two horses; one is so loaded as almost to break his back. The worthy baronet directs his groom to "adjust" the matter by loading the other horse so as almost to break his back. Your member seems to inherit the nautical principle of adjusting the stumbling of a nag whose nose was continually coming to the ground, by a heavy stone tied to his tail.

But this is only his desire "at the present moment." On the "reduction of duties," Sir J. Duckworth defers to the judgment of those "intrusted with the conduct of state affairs." We shall have Free Trade, therefore, when Sir Robert Peel thinks the time is come. You, electors of Exeter, leave the question of time to Sir J. Duckworth; and he leaves it to Sir Robert Peel; and he, again, leaves it to the constituencies. You might have accelerated the settlement; you have declined the duty of the day. Nothing is done, and you help to do nothing. Party considerations induce the government to run the awful risk of a bad harvest, with no stock of corn on hand, nor any means of mitigating the horrors that may ensue; and you stand by without interposing. Sir Robert Peel is willing to take hints,—he almost asks that they may be given. He looks and waits for such suggestion as your return of a free-trader would have furnished. And you send him a man who will look at him in return, and wait also,—like two Indians silently staring at one another,—all because it pleases you to be represented by a very respectable gentleman, "locally connected with your city."

You call General Briggs a "stranger." And yet, at this very moment, you know more of his public principles, and of what would be his public conduct, than you do of those of Sir J. Duckworth. You know how he would vote on the most interesting questions of the time; and I defy you to predict how Sir J. Duckworth will vote. You dislike the interference of strangers! What constitutes a stranger at Exeter? Are we not your countrymen? Do not most of us belong to the industrious classes? Have we not a common cause? Will Exeter thrive by what injures London or ruins Manchester? Are we not all taxpayers and bread-eaters, and dependent on the general prosperity of the country for our own thriving? Do not the representatives of Devon make laws for Lancashire? Has any non-intercourse law been enacted, to forbid the exchange of communications and expression of wishes from one locality to another? And what have the—so-called—strangers done in Exeter? They came not unasked nor unwelcomed. No club purse armed them with the agency of corruption. They offered no bribe; they uttered no threat. A strong sense of the necessity of Free Trade for the welfare of the community was their impulse. Hope that you would candidly listen to facts and arguments was their encouragement. They wanted nothing of you that was not for you. They desired to convince you of truths that have gained the general concurrence of thinking men. In a position of public affairs where large constituencies can render important services, they saw you had the power to help, and hoped you had the disposition. Like-minded men are strangers nowhere. Such they have found amongst you. This second struggle has cemented the union, commenced by the first, of common principles and objects. The petty prejudice of locality will not impede its progress. The motto of "Divide and conquer," is for the selfish and oppressive; "Smite and conquer," is that of honesty and patriotism. Free-traders act upon it, both in Exeter and out of Exeter. It is our watchword all over the country; and the time is coming to try its power throughout the country. Information, argument, and persuasion are never strangers among rational beings, though they should come from the world's end. Are fact and logic,—the dictates of experience,—the testimony of figures

to the tendency of a system,—the claims of justice for the laborious, and of humanity for the suffering,—not "locally connected with your city"? He who repudiates them as "strangers" any where, pronounces himself an alien from truth, prudence, and patriotism. To many of you they have been a passport for sympathy, a friendly introduction, a masonic sign of fraternity. Thanks to the 588 electors who, unchilled by indifference and unterrified by clamour, bore their testimony at the poll to the firmness of their faith in Free-Trade principles. They have earned their "charter and freehold of rejoicing" in the coming ascendency of those principles. In them the League is domesticated amongst you. We regard them as a pledge that eventually you will, by common consent, identify yourselves with the national demand, that every one shall enjoy the full amount of his fair earnings, his industrial rights being "adjusted" to his industrial duties.

No. XXXVII.

To the Electors of Sunderland.

July 26, 1845.

Gentlemen,—The event which has called your illustrious representative to the House of Lords also calls you to supply worthily his place in the House of Commons.

Earl Grey will continue to advocate the principles of which Lord Howick evinced himself the honest and able champion. With hereditary firmness and consistency he will make his future exertions as a peer only the continuance and natural sequence of those which so honourably characterised the member for Sunderland. Your late representative will thus be a living test of your own consistency in the choice of your future representative. Any man less devoted to the cause of justice and humanity in the concerns of trade, industry, and commerce,—less impressed with the necessity, rectitude, and beneficence of a Free-Trade policy,—or less incapable of compromising it for

party or personal objects,—will be a standing reproach to yourselves, a public testimony to your dereliction of principle, and a fall from the lofty position you have hitherto occupied. The world will "look on this picture and on that," and the incongruity become a by-word of reproach. A free-trader, of comprehensive intellect, of ready faculties, of decided principle, and of tried capacity for public service, is essential for the maintenance of your own character, and due to your own opinions on this momentous question.

The very obvious truth that Sunderland is not Salisbury or Exeter explains the kind of interest with which your proceedings are regarded. People look to you, not, as in those instances, to observe what progress Free Trade is making, and how its battles are fought, but to see and appreciate the conduct of a Free-Trade majority. Sunderland is not dominated over by neighbouring acres, for the fields of ocean are your neighbours. You grow ships. Your town is a terminus for the traffic of nations. Commerce is the condition of your prosperity. You are free-traders by a local necessity. Unrestricted intercourse for interchange is shown convincingly to be your interest, as it is the common interest, by the teachings of natural position. You can furnish demonstrations for Devon, and to Wiltshire bear witness for Free Trade. If untrue to your convictions, how shall we elsewhere expect conversions? You cannot be so, unless entrance be found amongst you for the demon of division. United, you are invincible; divide, and, amid the scoffs and jeers of mankind, you are prostrated before a monopolist minority.

There is no pending, nor, in the compass of probability, any possible question, that should split a Free-Trade majority at this critical moment; least of all should the responsibility of such a split be incurred when so able and indefatigable an advocate of this cause as Colonel Thompson is a candidate for your suffrages. For a long time Colonel Thompson was himself the cause of Free Trade; he wrote and spoke and laboured almost alone; his *Catechism* and other productions have made the tour of the civilised world, bearing fruit in many countries. In this present agitation, what young recruit, however zealous, has laboured like the veteran? His pithy sentences stick in a million memories.

His felicitous illustrations have shed their glancing light in the remotest points and darkest corners of the subject. He touches a sophism, and it recoils as a sarcasm on its authors. And over all his wit and wisdom there is the consecration of enlightened and enduring principle. Such a man free-traders should delight to honour. To you circumstances have confided the opportunity of bestowing upon him the laurel which their gratitude awards. Our cause will not suffer by transmission into his hands, though he receives it from a Howick. There are few besides—none that have been named in connection with this election—your choice of whom would not be a practical bathos. The descent would scarcely be lower, in rejecting him for a monopolist, than in the preference of a less-distinguished free trader.

Allow a "stranger," who is also a petitioner, to remind you that, should the wishes of your brethren in this cause be disappointed by division in your camp, it is difficult to calculate the disastrous results which may ensue. Whatever the pretext, that division is likely to become the fruitful parent of other divisions in other localities. If the free-traders of Sunderland reject Colonel Thompson because he is too Radical, the free-traders of other towns may retaliate by withholding their votes from a candidate whom they consider not Radical enough. The same feeling will be excited, and the same consequence may be apprehended, from any other of the shadowy distinctions of the day to which this vital question can be subordinated. An example will have been given to the whole body of Free-Trade electors, throughout the empire, of reducing Free Trade to a secondary consideration. Even should you be certain of returning a free-trader, you will also be certain of provoking the hostility of other classes of free-traders towards the return of any that do not pronounce their own political shibboleth. You will have led the way in going to the poll upon some other principle—or rather, perhaps, upon some mere party nickname—instead of upon the principle which is now on its trial before all constituencies. On the other hand, your forgetfulness of all subordinate distinctions and differences will be a noble pattern to which many a constituency will appeal. The friends of united exertion will point to Sunderland and its success. You will be their

watchword against discord. How many seats your election may thus decide! More will be done for cementing our union, and thereby insuring our success, than by a thousand exhortations. Consider, then, the immense importance of your conduct. Avoid the peril to those great interests of justice and humanity, of commercial freedom and national prosperity, which are now intrusted to your hands. Be one in their assertion. Achieve the good which is within your reach, and encourage us all—when our turn shall come—to sacrifice all minor points to the mighty question at issue. March to the poll, in your unbroken strength, with the shout—which will be reëchoed back to you from London, ay, and from multitudes of voices even to the Land's End—"Thompson and Free Trade for ever! Thompson and Free Trade for Sunderland!"

No. XXXVIII.

To George Hudson, Esq.

August 2, 1845.

Sir,—The principle—if principle it may be called—on which you are seeking to become the representative of Sunderland, is a novelty in political morality. Of your two chief supporters—Mr. J. J. Wright and Mr. R. Spoor—both declared themselves indifferent, and one of them ignorant, whether you were Whig, Tory, or Radical; and, for aught that appears, they were equally unconcerned whether you were monopolist or free-trader. As there was a free-trader already in the field, and the friends of that policy could not have a more acceptable candidate than Colonel Thompson, the common tactics of electioneering prompted the propitiation of the advocates of monopoly. But you are not started avowedly on that ground, nor pledged to it. The one great reason put forward for preferring you is, the local advantage anticipated from your influence. To this, we are distinctly told, the general in-

terests of the country are only a subordinate consideration. You are expected to enrich certain persons in Sunderland by your railway enterprises and speculations, therefore the electors of Sunderland are invited to make you one of the legislators of the British empire.

Sir, if the electors of Sunderland choose you on this ground, they will deserve disfranchisement. "Look," says Mr. Wright, "at the local interests of the town before casting our eyes to the wide extent of country." Why "before," if he presumes the local and national interests to be identical? Of that he seems as careless as about your Whiggery or Toryism. The inducement is a bribe, and as delusive as it is despicable. Were it ever so substantial, the attempt at corruption remains. The franchise is a trust. It is not held for conjoint advantage, any more than for individual advantage. Morally, the promise of profit and the payment of cash are the same thing; in all cases, at least, where the profit is independent, and in defiance of the common interests of the people. Your advocates tempt the electors to a disregard of their primary duty. They prompt to a selfish and sordid abuse of the power confided to the electors for patriotic purposes. However it may turn out otherwise, you will find this, sir, a bad speculation in the court of conscience. The honour of being M.P. must be somewhat tarnished by becoming accessory to a wholesale abuse and perversion of the electoral trust.

The bribe is a delusion. There is no hostility to Sunderland in the House of Commons. If any thing can be done profitably for the improvement of its port and railway communications, it will be done whether you get into parliament or remain content with your railway royalty. You would not object yourself to a promising investment in any such schemes. Should they not be promising, you will not ruin yourself by paying in that mode for your election after it is over. As for your personal influence in the House carrying any railway bill for the benefit of Sunderland which would be rejected were Colonel Thompson the sitting member, you are too shrewd not to laugh in your sleeve at the absurdity. Why, your very name will be a prejudice! Every body will look sharp after you. The exposures that have been made, and that are coming, in con-

nection with railway legislation, will surround you with jealousy and suspicion. The whole House and the public know your errand beforehand. You will be pointed at as "the man wot comes for a job." Your partisans convict and placard themselves as committing the most egregious kind of folly,—that of transparent knavery.

You talk big about the poor; and are yet, even yourself, a supporter of taxation upon their bread, meat, cheese, butter, and sugar. Save us from our friends! True, the railways in whose shares you have speculated so successfully have occasioned the employment of thousands. Would that employment have been a smaller boon, could they have purchased the necessaries of life without paying the landlord's tax thereon? What have the Corn Laws done for railways? What have they done for commerce? Your ambition looks complacently, and perhaps hopefully, at "those mansions which have been the residences of our aristocracy for centuries." Would railways ever have been required for the carriage-drives of their lordly occupants from mansion to mansion? Their business with railways has too frequently been that of obstruction, until slips of worthless land were purchased at the rate of thousands of pounds sterling per acre. For railways we may thank tall chimneys, and not Gothic mansions. They are the creators of trade. You are only a go-between. The manufacturers whom you abuse, whom you falsely charge with plotting for the reduction of wages, whose toils for the extension of trade you would counteract by upholding the food monopoly, who have found work for the surplus poor whom all the "fruitful valleys and fields" left unemployed and unfed,—they are the real creators of the system which, originating between Manchester and Liverpool, is extending itself through the country. For your own fortune, thank them. You have only fattened on the leaves of a tree of which their industry is the trunk, and railways the ramifications. Sunderland will have railways, if its own wants and those of adjacent districts require the convenience; and if not, King Hudson will be as powerless over the locomotives as was King Canute over the billows.

I wonder so wealthy a man should wear cast-off rags. You talk of supporting Peel, and deck yourself in his abandoned sophisms. Perhaps you were too busy to learn

that the "wages" argument and the "independence" argument for the Corn Laws are both worn out, thrown away, and trampled under foot. You have consulted the wrong volume of Hansard. These sophisms are now scrip at a discount. Peel has repudiated them. You must go further, or you are no true follower; nor do I doubt but you may. You have imitated your master in leaving a hole for future escape. "If it could be shown to me at any time that it would be of advantage to the poor that the Corn Laws should be repealed, I would advocate their repeal immediately." Peel will show you that, should Colonel Thompson fail; but it would be creditable to the Sunderland electors to prefer one who would reach that point in a more straightforward manner.

In the *Times* of Thursday you are reported to have told the electors that the poor can have foreign corn, just as the rich can have foreign wine, provided they pay the duty. A strange insult this for the poor to receive from a professed friend! Is there no difference between the duties on luxuries and those on the necessaries of life? What is 5*s*. 6*d*. per gallon on their wine to the lords of the "mansions" in which you delight?—20*s*. per quarter on corn is prohibition: but, as the Duke of Richmond said of glass and timber, they don't grow wines, and they do grow wheat. Our whole system of taxation, most of all in the Corn Laws, is taxation on the poor for the relief or the profit of the wealthy; and this system you uphold. You think to carry off the perception of its iniquity by boasting what you will do for the town and poor of Sunderland. Even of your favourite railways you are but a short-sighted advocate. They are not the offspring of aristocracy and "protection." Their progress and prosperity are contingent on that of trade. The friend of railways is the enemy of monopoly.

In the knowledge, the promptness, the principle, and the intellectual power of Colonel Thompson, the town of Sunderland will have good security that it shall forego no benefit, and sustain no loss, by the inertness of its representative; even although he will not put the interest of the town first, and those of the nation afterwards. Those who trust to such professions, for any locality whatever, will find themselves the dupes they deserve to be; and reap the

reward of disappointment for their breach of trust. May the electors of Sunderland have consciences to scorn the bribe, and brains to detect the delusion!

No. XXXIX.

To the Poor of Sunderland.

August 9, 1845.

Mr. Hudson says that he wishes to get into parliament, that he may vote in your favour. "I shall give my votes more especially for the poor." But, as the proverb says, "Fine words butter no parsneps." How does he mean to vote for you? Make him come to particulars. What he calls voting for you may be voting against you in your own opinion.

With some specimens of his friendly intentions you have been favoured already. He will vote for continuing the taxation upon your means of subsistence. What do you get by that? What advantage is it to you that in dear seasons the loaf costs one penny more, in every threepence or fourpence, than it need? that while you are pinching, foreign corn is sometimes kept till it rots, and then cast into the water to feed the fishes? that good butter is turned and spoiled for human use, because, as grease for the wheels of locomotives, it pays a lower duty? Do you like all this? Such voting for you is like the cook's voting for eels. Be grateful for being skinned, if such is your taste; but it is as well to understand the matter.

Mr. Hudson argues that it is all for your good; that your food is taxed to "protect," as it is called, the cultivation of grain at home, and thus find you in food and work. Now, how many of your class does the cultivation of the soil employ? About 25 out of 100. The remaining 75 must find other employment. They go to the manufacturer. The Corn Laws prevent his having so much for them to do as if trade were free. They take to the sea. But the foreign corn, which we must have, as it

comes at uncertain times, most frequently comes in foreign ships. From the same uncertainty, its coming in does not occasion the sending out, in return, of British manufactures in British vessels. So the Corn Laws blockade that opening for your labour. The less trade, the less traffic on the sea, the fewer ships wanted, and the fewer hands engaged in making sails, cordage, anchors, &c. You are stopped again. The food monopoly hunts you about in all directions. Want says, "Work," and Monopoly prevents your getting work. Hunger says, "Eat;" and Monopoly says, If you do, you shall pay for it above your means. The system is an infamous persecution of industry.

So stands the case with the great majority, with 75 out of every 100. How fares it with the favoured 25—the labourers in agriculture?

Their food is dearer, too. They suffer together with others in that particular. Is the difference made up to them by higher wages? Were they paid more when wheat was 60*s.* the quarter than while it fetches 45*s.*? Ask them. Let them tell whether years of semi-starvation to others were to them years of plenty. It is no such thing. They do not feed on your famine. The interests of the industrious poor are one and the same. They thrive, as you do, in plenty and prosperity.

If the Corn Laws were repealed, Mr. Hudson says, "land would be thrown out of cultivation;" fruitful fields would "become a desert." Thank him for not saying the land would be thrown out of the country into the sea—into the moon! He might as well have said so. Land must always be worth more by cultivation than if left desert. Landlords will not cut off their noses in that way, simply for having in vain set their faces against Corn-Law Repeal. They know who would cultivate the land, if they did not. Were it deserted, the labourers could get more than their present wages out of it for themselves.

These threats of not cultivating are all rhodomontade. Is your friend of the poor afraid lest the poor should have too much food? That is the great danger against which the Corn Laws guard. You could easily dispose of all the corn and cattle that can be imported, in addition to all the corn and cattle that can be produced at home. Heaven is bountiful, and earth is fertile; but mouths are

made as fast as meat. Let us get enough, before we fall in love with laws and taxes to prevent too much. Natural plenty is your interest, not artificial scarcity.

Free Trade is more trade; monopoly is less trade. Work depends upon trade. They rise or fall, extend or diminish, together. Multiply work, and you raise wages. Mr. Hudson talks of the increased employment afforded by railways. It is a good thing; but only one of the many good things resulting from trade. More trade, and more railways; less trade, and fewer railways, besides the damage to those already existing. To boast of railways, and vote against trade, as Mr. Hudson promises to do, is like boasting of wholesale bottle-making, and preventing the existence of wine, ale, or even soda-water, to be preserved therein for human use. Thank you for nothing, unless there be wholesome liquid for the bottles.

After all, are you really the poor for whom Mr. Hudson means to vote? Does he not rather intend the poor landlords, who cannot get more than twice the rent they did fifty years ago, nor afford to keep up the increased expenditure of their establishments, and pay mortgages and marriage-settlements, without putting their hands into the pockets of the public? The poverty he practically most compassionates is that which inhabits "mansions which have been the residences of our aristocracy for centuries." He pities the privations they might suffer from your buying your food in the cheapest market. You have his professions, they would have his performance. You have his words, they would have his votes. King Hudson patronises the poor nobility; and the unearned wages he would increase are those of labouring landlords. They have toiled in laying on the burden of a bread-tax, and he will assist to strap it tightly on your backs. The poor lords! They have just passed a bill for helping themselves to your commons. Most of you have, perhaps, no direct power in the decision of this contest. Mr. Hudson is so well satisfied with his own readiness to vote for you, that he sees no occasion why any of you should ever vote for yourselves; nor, on his principles, is it needful. Your bread can be taxed, your commons taken, your trade restricted, and your earnings appropriated, without your interference.

No. XL.

To the "True Blues" of Maldon.

August 16, 1845.

GENTLEMEN,—You call yourselves Conservatives; your club is professedly a Conservative club; your borough is boasted to have turned the scale of representation in the county of Essex, so as to render it at the last election immaculately Conservative; your recent anniversary dinner stands as the first of that series of Conservative meetings which usually commences at this season; and you are avowedly looked to for upholding the banner of Conservatism, and nailing it to the mast, at the next election. Gentlemen, will these pretences bear investigation? Are you true to your principles, and true to the Conservative cause throughout the empire? It will go hard with you, in the reply to these questions, if the proceedings at your late anniversary are to be made the grounds of the decision.

The principal speakers were, Sir J. Tyrrell, Bart., M.P.; G. Palmer, Esq., M.P.; P. Bennet, jun., Esq., M.P.; Q. Dick, Esq., M.P.; the Rev. W. Holland; and Mr. Baker, of Writtle. In looking through their speeches, the first fact which strikes the attention is the absence of all the great topics of the political creed of Conservatism. They are overshadowed and apparently obliterated by the simple subject of what is called agricultural protection. On this was expended the eloquence of your orators; for this you were exhorted to reserve your votes and interests at the next election. In spirit, though not in express language, monopoly was paramount to monarchy, and the constitution was to be chiefly conserved by the custom-house. You were not, indeed, expressly told that Conservative ascendency should be sacrificed to the preservation of Corn Laws; but it was the tendency of the entire proceedings to send you to the hustings well prepared so to victimise your political principles should those laws be in peril.

Now, it is very possible, and not improbable, that such a collision is coming. Sir Robert Peel seems long to have foreseen that Conservatism must stagger under the burden

of the Corn Laws, and either throw it off or be crushed beneath its weight. From the moment of his gaining office, with a power scarcely ever before possessed by any minister, the adjustment of this matter has been the object of his most anxious solicitude. No little cloud across the Atlantic causes him such foreboding, or elicited such a diversity of language or succession of measures. The food monopoly is a rock in his course. For a time he avoids shipwreck by blasting off some of its most perilous protuberances. Permanently, his only safety is in blowing it up altogether. You are incited to resist this attempt when the time comes for him to make it; that is to say, your leaders counsel you to conserve the rock, and not the ship; sage counsel, which, if followed, would entitle them to call you the primest of Essex calves.

One and all your orators attacked Sir Robert Peel. The clergyman talked sliply of Jesuitry; Sir John Tyrrell did not doubt that, "at the next election, you will show him that you will not trust him with a dozen of oranges." Mr. Palmer directly contradicted the last great speech of the premier as to the possibility of independence on foreign supplies of food. Mr. Dick acknowledged his eminent talents, but "deprecated his temporising policy and pusillanimous truckling." Captain Bennet "had heard expressions which alarmed him exceedingly," and "that ominous word 'expediency,' so often uttered, as well as hints about further simplifying the tariff," that he urged your sticking to inexpediency in Essex as strenuously as they had done in West Suffolk, by electing him for a representative. Mr. Baker accused Sir Robert Peel of "sowing tares with the wheat"—the work of the devil, according to scripture; and professed himself "quite opposed to the opinions carried out by the government upon many occasions during the present session;" and, if I may advert to a greater than Peel,—one who, according to your chairman's friend and authority, is "the greatest man since the time of our Saviour,"—the Duke of Wellington,—even he, in the full tide of apotheosis, is yet said to be "in some degree mistaken upon the public policy of the country." Such was the cannonading at your festival upon the Conservative leaders. This was no round of salutes, but hot shot and sharp firing. True Blues of Maldon, under what colours do you fight

this battle? Whatever your flag, you are firing upon Conservatism.

The Corn-Law question is not a Conservative question; its solution is to be found in economical facts, not in political principles. It is no more a test of Toryism than the doctrine of transubstantiation; whether the farmer gets by it, is a question for his experience; and whether the people get by it, is a question for his observation. But suppose a man to read and understand Adam Smith,—to perceive how dependent agriculture is for its prosperity upon commerce and manufacture, and they, again, for their prosperity upon the freedom and extension of trade; suppose him to prefer having rich customers to poor ones in the neighbouring towns and districts; to dislike being made a tax-gatherer upon the public by the artificial price of his produce, only that he may pay that taxation over to his landlord in the shape of rent; and to see the utter vanity of attempting to fix prices by Act of Parliament, and its gross deceptiveness as affecting the bargain betwixt landlord and tenant;—suppose this,—and has any one the right to say that such a man ceases to be a Conservative? Those who tell you so, or who take it for granted, because they hope insinuation may do the job better than assertion, are trying to use you as tools. Their aim is to catch a Conservative, and make him a monopolist. They either hoist false colours now, or are false to the colours which they hoisted of old. They attempt to smuggle their own interests with parliament under cover of your principles.

In the recent history of our country, a liberal commercial policy has exhibited more practical affinity with Toryism than with Whiggery. Circumstances made Mr. Pitt a war minister, but not until it had become evident what would have been in quieter times the spirit of his government. And what raised Mr. Pitt to the premiership? What but his gallant attack on the Fox-and-North scheme for rendering an East-India connection subservient to the purposes of patronage and party? Anterior to the revolutionary war, his most celebrated measure was the Commercial Treaty with France, signed at Versailles on the 26th of September 1786. This treaty swept away a host of restrictions on the trade between the two countries. It lowered the duties on wine, brandy, oil; on hardware,

cutlery, and a great variety of manufactured articles; and it provides amply for the freedom and safety of ships and persons engaged in trade. Munitions of war going to nations engaged in hostilities with either of the contracting parties were declared contraband, and liable to seizure; but there was a large enumeration of articles not so liable,—among which, with a wise humanity, were included "wheat and barley, and any other kind of corn and pulse; tobacco and all kinds of spices; salted and smoked flesh, salted fish, cheese and butter; beer, oil, wines, sugar; all sorts of salt, and of provisions which serve as sustenance and food to mankind." No commercial treaty ever went so far as this in the recognition of the completest freedom of interchange; nor did any ever produce so prompt and salutary an effect upon the country. All interests found their advantage in this operation. It was a great triumph of the party, which carried its approval in the Commons against the strenuous hostility of the Whigs, led on by Charles Fox, and assisted by the late Earl (then Mr.) Grey, who made his maiden speech in reprobation of this measure.

If we seek the theory of Free Trade, it is eloquently asserted by Burke, the oracle of modern Conservatism. He lost his seat for Bristol by his advocacy of a freer trade with Ireland than existed previously. In that day the merchants and manufacturers were the patrons of monopoly. If instead of the theory we inquire after the practical and legislative application, Mr. Huskisson's name immediately occurs to the memory. He was Peel's pioneer. In Bath we note the characteristic caution of Conservatism; but success alike encourages and demands the fuller application of principle so satisfactorily tested.

Keep as clear, then, as you will of the Whigs; but remember that if you persist in this extraneous appendage to your politics, you may drive many good Conservatives into the ranks of Whiggery. There is no surer way of enforcing desertion than by stitching the black patch of monopoly upon the blue banner of Conservatism. You know the course opinion is taking, even in your own locality. Sir John Tyrrell told you at your dinner of "a powerful and combined party, who have so perseveringly and pertinaciously advocated what I venture to call wrong principles, that they have, I am told, even in this country and this

neighbourhood, succeeded in making some impression." Sir John does not speak without knowing the facts. But those of whom he speaks are not Whigs. They are tied to no faction. They wage no war with your Conservatism. Their quarrel is simply with taxation for the landlords' profit, and not for the Queen's revenue. And must you needs go out of your way as Conservatives—alienate your friends, draw down hostility upon yourselves, demolish your own cleverest leaders, and strengthen the hands of Whiggery—for such a purpose as that? "True Blue," indeed! True blarney! I profess no sympathy in many of your political notions, nor with those of Whiggery either; to my perceptions, there is much of faction in both. But what I most dislike in the leaders of both is the cajolery so often practised on their followers. There was plenty of it in the speeches at your anniversary. I hate to see the people tricked into stultifying themselves for the sake of a class who are aiming at their own profits; so I have exposed it.

No. XLI.

To New Electors.

August 23, 1845.

The registration lists are every where enlarged. The discovery is at last made that the machinery of the Reform Act, hitherto worked chiefly by party agents for party purposes, may be worked by the people also for their own rights and interests. Many will gain their title to vote at the next election who have never voted before. To such I address myself. You enter upon the exercise of a public trust. You acquire the high privilege of political enfranchisement. You become a member of the ruling class. New duties arise with new powers. The mode in which you discharge those duties and exercise those powers is a public concern; multitudes will be the better or the worse for your conduct as electors. I commend the subject to your consideration as reflective and responsible beings. My

present purpose is limited to one point, on which no small portion of the existing constituencies exhibits either a deplorable ignorance or a corruption yet more deplorable. I allude to the cry now so frequently raised, because it is found a telling one, of local interests.

The late Mr. Somes was elected for Dartmouth, and Mr. Hudson is returned for Sunderland, avowedly on the expectation of particular advantages to accrue to those localities from the political connection thus constituted. Wherever you live, you will soon be plied by a similar inducement. Candidates will always be found who will say at the hustings what has been said at the hustings before with apparent effect. They are like inferior actors, who mimic any tone or gesture by which a former actor has made a hit, in the hope of making hits also. It will be for you practically to confirm or rebuke the electors who have voted for this local-interest theory. What does it deserve, —to be scouted or sanctioned?

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," said the Hebrew of old. Not only the land of one's birth, but the town or parish of one's birth, has its hold upon the mind. The interest of a town is that of the townspeople. If grass grow in the streets, there is little of custom at the shop, or of work in the warehouse. Nor was that other than an honourable boast of the ancient, that he had found the city of brick and left it of marble. Let the Sunderlander revel in the hope of rails and the construction of docks. Every where let industry ply its tools, and enterprise plan its achievements. There is room for more Manchesters and Liverpools in the country and on the coast. But Manchester and Liverpool did not grow to their greatness by making members of parliament. If so, Old Sarum would have anticipated the one and rivalled the other. Their secret is in their industrial and commercial history. It is open to the study of any aspiring port or borough, and affords no special encouragement to the hope of local prosperity by the votes of a constituency.

Individuals often exist who are eminently capable of rendering services in the localities to which they are attached; they have an eye for improvement. In some dreary and noxious waste they see the future pride of a farm, or the pleasure-ground of a toiling population. They

calculate how the increase of the town may be made the wealth of the adjacent country. They suggest how relative position may be rendered a profitable relation. They devise and institute proceedings to realise their devices. Blessings are they to their neighbours, and their neighbours bless them. But why send them to parliament? Why make them legislators of the British Empire? Why intrust to them the direction of the national policy? The man may be as totally unfit for that as for being Archbishop of Canterbury. His merit, and such a recompense, have no more relation than the mechanical skill of a clever cabinet-maker has to taking the command of a frigate in war-time.

Local improvements often require Acts of Parliament; and local interests sometimes need protection against encroachment by other localities. For these purposes, every man who has the higher qualifications of a representative, and who attends to his constituents, is perfectly competent. They are included in the mental and moral attributes, without which no man should be thought of for parliament. They cannot be put forward as recommendations without implying some flaw in more essential recommendations. You never need say of a man, that as a legislator he will promote the interests of a district, if he possess the principles, the wisdom, and the energy which will advance the well-being of a nation.

There are few localities whose prosperity does not rise and fall with that of the community. The elements of prosperity are generally identical. Here and there an exception occurs. Some towns may fare as certain inns have fared on old roads, where there used to be many stage-coaches and much posting. They are deserted now; left alone with their glory. Suppose such innkeepers to have the power of returning members to parliament. What would it avail? They cannot turn the tide of public convenience, nor arrest that of improvement. If they could, it would be a dirty job. All their advantage would be purchased by the prostitution of a sacred right. But in truth the attempt would be not less vain than wicked. They must flit, or in some other way accommodate themselves to circumstances. Remember the Arabian prophet. When the mountain would not come to Mahomet, then Mahomet

very wisely went to the mountain. If the line will not yield to the landlord, the landlord must yield to the line. He may still drive a thriving trade at the station, but not all the members he can make will keep up the custom of the old house.

If this cant of local interests be unsound policy, it is worse morality. When one voter sacrifices the country to his town, why should not another sacrifice the town to his family? If a dock may bribe a borough, why not a purse bribe an elector? Where is the difference between promising to 500 people, "I will make you a railway," and to five people, "I will build each of you a house"? There is a reciprocal bribery in the case. The constituency is bribed by the job to the bestowment of parliamentary honours; and the candidate is bribed by the parliamentary honours to the attempted completion of the promised job. Thus is the electoral population demoralised by its leaders. Every half-starved voter understands the transaction; he knows he can play the same game as his betters. They traffic for themselves, and so can he. The bargain is a little coarser in its external character, but that is all the difference. No vender of a vote for cash or grog but may plead the same reasons as were unblushingly assigned at Dartmouth for the election of Mr. Somes, and at Sunderland for that of Mr. Hudson.

The Corn-Law robbery by the landed lords of legislation is at the root of this corruption. They set the example of lowering the character of national legislation by making it subservient to class interests. It comes to the same thing whether your class be indicated by holding a particular species of property, or by inhabiting a particular locality; what matters it, when you choose, not the man who is most fitted for legislative functions, but the champion of certain class interests, whether the interests be those of landowners or of Sunderlanders? You are alike guilty of abusing your trust, of perverting to selfish ends a power which you hold for the good of millions, and for the exercise of which you are responsible to the opinion of the millions.

The man of soundest and wisest public principles, and of the highest qualifications, intellectual and moral, to give those principles effect—that is what you have to look for

and to support. In avoiding the bad practices to which custom may have dulled the consciences of many old voters, you will be encouraged by public opinion, which has of late been happily brought to bear upon this point by the exertions of the League. The industry of the empire has appealed from its parliament to its constituencies. Refused by the one, it asks from the other the verdict to which it is entitled against monopoly. In a corrupt state, where each class seeks its own exclusive advantage from the forms of legislation, electoral offences may pass as peccadilloes, which become grave crimes when justice is demanded at the hands of all. By obtaining the franchise you are sworn of the jury by which this great cause will soon be tried. Sterner rebukes than formerly will follow on political delinquencies. The next general election will try the spirit and decide the fate of the people: "England expects every man to do his duty."

No. XLII.

To the Hon. Sidney Herbert, M.P.

August 30, 1845.

Sir,—You are, I am told, a young man of prepossessing appearance and manners. It is sad to see such a person go morally wrong, while striving to be politically right. Your public life is yet in its apprenticeship. A double misfortune attends the commencement of your career. You are a juvenile official, which is undesirable, as the temptations of party without the addition of those of office quite suffice to try the mental integrity of a youthful legislator. And, moreover, you serve under masters whose want of simplicity and straightforwardness is unparallelled even in the annals of parliament. The position is a most unpropitious one. You must repeatedly have found it so during the last session. Whenever Sir Robert Peel or Sir James Graham deemed the occasion beneath their dignity, or when there

was danger of committing themselves for the future, you were pushed forward to do the work. Who cared about your being committed? Who took charge of your consistency? Motions from the free-traders, and amendments from the protectionists, were to be got rid of; you were deputed to sweep the floor and clear the stage; and, so that the job of the night was accomplished, there was little concern for its plunging you into difficulties and entanglements. Ministers had nothing at stake. They are not bound to answer for your escapades. If you get into a scrape, you must task your wits to get out of it again as best you can. For the night, you lead the House. That "little brief authority" over, did it ever occur to your mind to ask where circumstances are leading you? If not at the time, some such inquiry may have been forced upon you by the recent meeting of the Farmers' Club of South Wilts. You were then driven to your explanations, for the satisfaction of others. How far they were satisfactory to yourself is best known to your own conscience. If you felt any qualms, they would probably recall to your memory the well-known prophecy of Dr. Johnson to William Windham, when your unsophisticated predecessor in office questioned whether he could get on amid its corruptions: "Fear not, sir; you will soon become as pretty a scoundrel as any of the set." Translated, of course, into gentler phraseology, have you not felt some apprehensions lest this should be the oracle of your own destiny?

On one of the occasions when you were set up as the foremost ninepin for the free-traders to bowl at, you stumbled on the unlucky word which has ever since stuck in the throats and memories of farmers. According to universal and uncontradicted reports at the time, you admonished farmers not to come to parliament with whining petitions for protection, but to put their own shoulders to the wheel. Now you say that your language was falsified, and that it really was, "that it would be distasteful to the agriculturists to come whining to parliament for assistance, and we would not do it." Thus you endeavour to convert the supposed rebuke into a panegyric. You tell the farmers that they do not complain of distress and seek relief; they are not supplicants for parliamentary help; they do not place their reliance upon protection; they do

not whine, neither they nor their petitions; they are above it, and it is distasteful to them. I hope they like your praise. It has some resemblance to that of the midshipman who said the ship's purser was not fit to carry offal to a bear; and, on being commanded to apologise, made his recantation, and declared that he was fit to carry offal to a bear.

One who complains of misrepresentation should take heed to his own correctness. Your apology is introduced by an elaborate distortion of Mr. Cobden's speech in support of his motion for a Committee of Inquiry into Agricultural Distress. It is not true that he "held very derisive language with respect to the agriculturists." He spoke with feeling of their condition, and with indignation of the delusion practised upon them. He traced the origin of their misfortunes. He laid bare the reasons why capital does not flow towards the cultivation of land as it does towards other occupations where its legitimate profits are better secured. He argued the necessity of leases as safeguards for the farmers' outlay; and of better leases than the absurd and tricky documents which often bear that name. He did not talk of "whining" petitions, nor of "whining" farmers. He became himself a petitioner for the farmers, that the evils which press on them might be understood and remedied. His derision of them is a fiction. The derision, if any, was your own. The pleader for inquiry must have much less ability than you recognise in Mr. Cobden if he derides those who endure the sufferings into which he would persuade others to inquire. Derision is not the cue of the advocate, but of the opponent of investigation. And that was your function. I do not say you employed it. I only say that you talked of "whining," and would now be very glad to cut the word out of the dictionary, especially out of that dictionary to which the *Times* has resorted for illustrations of its meaning.

This is not the only misrepresentation in which you indulged for the sake of making out a case to the farmers of South Wilts. "Mr. Cobden's proposition was, that a committee should be appointed to inquire into agricultural distress, which he assured us would be another engine to blow up agricultural protection." And then you described him as "not a safe man in whose hands to place the interests

of agriculturists." Now I tell you, on the evidence of contemporary and authentic report, that Mr. Cobden did not so describe the proposed committee. All the colour for your perversion is, that he undertook himself to bring before the committee a mass of evidence that should explode the notion of protection. He affirmed that this would be done by the facts and authorities of the blue-book so produced, when it should be published. Mr. Cobden did not aim, as you intimate, at getting the interests of the agriculturists into his own hands, whether safe or unsafe. He volunteered that the committee should contain, not only a majority of county members, but a majority of members of the Central Society of Agriculture. These were the hands into which he was willing, and you were unwilling, to intrust the inquiry. You dealt with the facts of the case on the assumption that Mr. Cobden's speech had not been read, or would not be recollected. Your progress is promising in the disingenuousness of party tactics. You have graduated in the college of "Farmers' Friends," if not in that of Jesuits. You say, forsooth, that after Mr. Cobden's speech you rose "as a county member." Not so, sir. You rose as Sir Robert Peel's fugleman, to show the train-band at the back of the Treasury bench which way they were to march in a division upon a motion obviously entitled to the hearty support of every friend of agriculture and agriculturists.

On a more recent occasion—Mr. Ward's motion—you had to do duty as the leader of the majority for the night. And then, what one reason did you give for refusing inquiry into the alleged peculiar burdens on land? What single instance of mischief is to be apprehended from ascertaining the facts? To what person, to what class, to what branch of the public service, or to whose private feelings and interests, did you show that the desired knowledge would be injurious? Where would have been the harm to man, woman, or child—to beast of the field, or bird of the air? It would not have hurt a cock-sparrow, or have crushed a daisy. You stood in the unenviable condition of a man who objects to the authentication of facts, without having, professedly at least, any objection to the facts themselves. You did battle for ignorance "in the abstract," without even the pitiful excuse of its being "folly to be wise."

You asked the majority to say, "We determine not to know," and the majority said so accordingly.

One exception, perhaps, ought to be made to this description of your speech. You anticipated that the committee, if appointed, would disregard facts, and report in conformity with the spirit of party or the dictates of previous opinion. In this case, you argue, "the report would have no other effect than to bring discredit on the committees of that House." And would not the discredit be deserved? Ought not the men who are capable of such conduct to be exposed? Does not the majority, by rejecting a motion on such grounds, lower itself to the level of those over whom it throws the shield of its protection? What strange chivalry was this in you, to refuse information for the sake of screening those who, as you predicted, would falsify facts on account of their interests, their party, or their prejudices! To discredit them and their official apologists would not be the only effect. The public would be put in possession of the evidence as well as of the conclusions. There would be enough who could not be mystified. The knowledge to which you object would come, together with the justice to which you object.

By following your lead, the protectionist landlords did not better their position. The cry of "peculiar burdens" is the best part of their stock-in-trade. It serves for meetings, tracts, and parliament. Sir Robert Peel himself formerly condescended to its employment when coquetting with them for political help. And with what face can it now be made to do duty? How can any set of people have the effrontery to talk of burdens which they will not allow to be specified? When they open their mouths in public, will not that night's vote be a rotten egg in the aperture? They have no right ever to breathe a syllable on the subject again. Their own vote has put the topic *hors de combat*. If they will not have their burdens known, they cannot have their burdens reckoned. The pretence of special burdens on the landlords is a hoax by their own implied confession. You rendered them that very back-handed service,—led them into a quagmire, and persuaded them to hang themselves, to be cut down at the convenience of their friends—the ministry.

So far as "peculiar burdens" affect the agricultural

tenantry, both Mr. Cobden's motion and Mr. Ward's were adapted to promote the redress of any existing wrong. You have exhibited yourself on these and other occasions as the active enemy of useful and authentic information. You prefer darkness; and if your superiors in office intrust you with their designs, you keep your friends as much in the dark as you can. There is something of the ambiguity of an ancient oracle in your assurance to the South-Wilts farmers that "you do not partake of the alarm that we are going to have a free trade in corn." It may be at hand, and yet you may not be alarmed. You have no instructions on the subject. You have spoken as from an official cloud, and let the farmers make what they can of it. Doubtless the great solicitude of the moment was, that their wine should wash out the memory of your "whine." It had already made you bold. You were "not ashamed," you said, of your course, although "the special organ of the Anti-Corn-Law League" had stated that "you dared not show your face amongst your constituents after that language." Here I admit your triumph. The "special organ" had given you credit for more grace than you possess; for more of the ingenuous shame of youth betrayed into a false position; for more annoyance with yourself, and respect for your constituents, under the consciousness of error, which manly confession might have redeemed, but which misrepresentation of others can only aggravate. I hope the "special organ" will acknowledge its mistake, and be careful of again ascribing to you that sense of shame which belongs to the young whom party and office have not sophisticated.

No. XLIII.

To Sir Frederick Thesiger, M.P., Attorney-General, &c.

September 6, 1845.

Sir, — The three bad harvests of 1837, '38, and '39, extending their results into the two following years, when the crops were about an average, were attended by a

mass of suffering which the founders of the League ascribed to the mischievous operation of the Corn Laws. The correctness of their inference was practically acknowledged by Sir Robert Peel, the head of the administration by which you are retained as one of its legal servants. In 1842, he introduced the present Corn Law as an appropriate substitute for one which made protection "excessive." The change subjected his consistency to impeachment; reference was made, not only to speeches recorded in *Hansard*, but to the electioneering cries by which the former ministry had been defeated in the general election; and the party of which Sir Robert Peel is the leader was exposed to the peril of schism and disorganisation in a greater degree than on any former occasion since 1829. Very strong, indeed, must therefore have been the conviction upon Sir Robert Peel's mind that the League leaders were substantially correct in their reasonings.

In 1842, '43, and '44 we had good harvests. During those years, the price of food was comparatively low; if distress did not disappear, it was largely mitigated, and manufacturing industry resumed and extended those operations which affect the subsistence of the workman as well as the profit of the capitalist. Again the friends of Free Trade have directed public attention to the connection of cause and effect. They have shown how these opposite phenomena are illustrative of the same principle. In nothing extenuating the richness of the harvests or the degree of prosperity, but passing in both cases the facts as they are, they have proved the relation of the price of food to the comfort of the people, with a sympathy as much alive to the good as to the evil, and with as little disposition as inducement to misrepresent either the one or the other.

This year a third phase appeared. After symptoms of a most abundant crop came an extraordinary succession of unpropitious weather, threatening its total destruction. It was known, at the same time, that an exceedingly small quantity of foreign corn was warehoused; and that no country was in a condition to afford us a large and prompt supply. In the City articles of the daily papers during great part of the months of July and August you may read the influence of the apprehension thus excited. It

extended to all the operations of the money-market. The stock-broker, as well as the corn-merchant, took to cloud-watching. Morning and evening worship was paid to the barometer. And was not this a time for those who had sorrowed when the Corn Law virtually repealed the providential law of bounty and enjoyment, and who had rejoiced when the providential law of bounty and enjoyment virtually repealed the Corn Law, to partake of the common anxiety; to lay bare the causes of so abject and pernicious a national dependence upon the weather; and to put a clear perception of the crisis in the place of vague fears, vain anticipations, and the unpreparedness, even in thought, which aggravates every kind of calamity? This was the course pursued by the free-traders. It perfectly harmonises with their conduct from the first, from the time of suffering, when the soundness of their reasoning had the subsequent sanction of Sir Robert Peel, at the expense of his own political character for consistency and foresight.

And now, Sir Frederick, perhaps you may inquire why I remind you of all this? It is to show that, if you be not an ignorant man, you are not above acting upon the ignorance of others; if you be not a sordid man, you can minister to the sordidness of others; if you be not a malignant man, you can pander to the malignity of others. A few words suffice for proof: "I trust that those who are anxious for some distress, and the pressure of famine, to carry out their projects, will be disappointed, and that the law which regulates the price of corn will be undisturbed." Such is the language which you are reported to have used to your constituents at Abingdon a few days since. You have involved the enemies of the Corn Laws in one sweeping and demoniacal accusation of a desire for distress and famine. You have done this without evidence, and in defiance of evidence. You have confounded illustrious individuals and nameless multitudes in the same indiscriminating vituperation. To ascribe the blackest of crimes, you have invented the foulest of motives. Your accusation is less a libel upon the League than upon nature.

The ignorance of your speech holds due proportion with its vituperative character. You did not perceive the

recoil upon the statesman under whom you have taken employment. Even his modification of the Corn Law is beyond your comprehension. You say it "regulates the price of corn." Ask him whether it has done so. Spare some minutes for the simplest statistics of the time. Probably you did not expect that such a panegyric on the law exposes it to condemnation on all hands for egregious failure. You call "Free Trade a delusion," for this notable reason,—that it cannot be completely free unless "all the nations that carry on commerce with each other take off all restrictions." You might as well have argued that trade could not be free unless nature removed all her restrictions on intercourse, in the form of seas and mountains, forests and deserts. You have not learned that the policy of our "buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest" is not contingent upon the impolicy of those who repel customers by making their own market artificially dear. We get nothing by lowering ourselves to the ignorance or purblind selfishness of other nations. Free Trade is a question for our own conduct, which we can regulate; not about that of others, which we cannot regulate. They foolishly restrict, in some instances, because we have been so foolish as to restrict; and you would have us prolong the action and reaction of the absurd imitation. Towards this "delusion," however, Sir Robert Peel is advancing. You approve of the "delusion" precisely so far as he has hitherto gone into it, but no further. "I can truly say, that so far as the present government have carried out their principles, they have been most beneficial." But Sir Robert Peel has broadly intimated that he will go further. It is the necessary sequel of what he has done already. Then you must eat another slice of "delusion;" or else resist him, and recant your praise. Perhaps, at length, you may discover that the demons who desire "distress" and "famine" are only anxious for cheapness and plenty. Nevertheless, your ill-advised denunciation and your "most-admired confusion" will remain upon record,—a warning to future orators "learned in the law" against exhibiting themselves so thoroughly unlearned in political economy, and so utterly unfit to judge of other men's motives.

You have followed the custom of the bar, "more

honoured in the breach than in the observance." You have spoken as if holding a brief officially for the present Corn Law. You thought it made for your case to "abuse the plaintiff's attorney." You have striven to fix the imputation of guilt upon unoffending parties. You have disregarded general principles in the advocacy of particular and partial measures. You have carried the worst habits of the hired lawyer into the seat of the impartial legislator. You have spoken to your constituents as if they were a jury to be cajoled, and of laws and institutions as if they were a contested property. You paid for the dinner of your partisans, and praised their independence, while throwing their votes into the scale for making the people's dinners more costly. You magnify the ministry that promotes yourself, while ignorantly assailing the only principles on which its imperfect policy can be justified. You vilify free-traders, on whom your leader relies as his most honest and efficient auxiliaries against his wrong-headed followers. If the attorney-general be a public prosecutor on behalf of whatever is wise and right in the government, your first duty is to proceed against yourself, and to submit to the award of those pains and penalties for confusion of thought, facility of imputation, and license of speech, which you have so amply merited.

No. XLIV.

To his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, E.M., &c. &c.

October 4, 1845.

My Lord Duke,—Long after the Corn Laws shall be abandoned and practically forgotten, the spirit in which they were enacted will remain in lively remembrance. The fact will stand in dark colours on the page of history that the landed aristocracy of England legislated for high rents by means of artificial scarcity. Posterity will judge such an attempt by its moral character, whatever the religious

profession of its supporters, and whether they adhered to the old church or the new church of these realms. Fresh evidence will be adduced of the truth, that in all external forms of Christianity there has been a melancholy inconsistency with the precepts of Christianity. Should your grace's speeches descend to that time, you will be regarded as one not over-mindful of the rule of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us.

Your grace presided at the Arundel and Bramber Annual Agricultural Exhibition, on the 25th ult. You complained loudly of your tenantry, and were not sparing of minute exhortations to them to improve their farms. You have offered prizes, one wholly and the other partly out of your own pocket, of 50*l.* each, for the best-cultivated farm and the employment of the greatest number of labourers. For the one there were "three or four competitors," for the other only two; the same person winning the one and dividing the other. What a silly farce is this prize-giving! The desideratum is to make improvement the farmer's interest. You cannot do that by your annual sugar-plums. You have failed to do it by the Corn Laws, which are, in fact, an offer from the landlords to the cultivators of a share in the public plunder extracted by those laws. Property in the soil, for a considerable time at least, is the condition of any large outlay on agricultural improvement. Why should others spend and plan and toil for the enhancement of your property? Why should they trim the fences to please your eye, or increase the labourers to win your praises or your prizes? You are unreasonable to expect it. Let them see the prospect of remuneration. Let them have long leases, free from the ruinous risk which must continue until these tottering Corn Laws are abolished. You "know something of farming," you say; have you not learned that elementary lesson?

Your grace has started a new cause—that of landowners *versus* rick-thatchers. Not every labourer, it seems, can thatch a rick. Something of skill and dexterity is required for the operation. The poor fellows who possess the qualification feel their worth in the market. They have not obtained a law that only themselves shall thatch ricks for the farming community: they are not lord dukes and legislators. They have asked for no taxation upon the

rick-thatchers of other counties or countries—no suppression of competition has been attempted—but they have simply tried to raise the market price of their work to the proportion of their skill and numbers. And for this you complain of them; for this you abuse them; for this you threaten to swamp them by the machinery of prize-giving for more rick-thatchers in the market. You offer a premium for competition, to reduce their wages and diminish their employment.

"Within the last few weeks, while the ricks had been making, the farmers had been put to great inconvenience by men who could thatch giving themselves great airs, or asking for more money, or going to others. Now, that would cease as soon as they got more thatchers; therefore, he proposed to give four premiums, two for thatching and two for rick-making, the same as in the rape of Bramber. There would be 2*l.* for the best wheat-rick, and for the second, 1*l.*; and, also, for the best thatcher, 2*l.*, and the second premium, 1*l.*"

Were parliament to offer a bounty on the importation of foreign corn, it would only be dealing with you as you propose to deal with these poor rick-thatchers. Never again, my lord duke, cant about a manufacturers' war on wages. Never again boast of the "one boat" for landlords, tenants, and labourers. If but a few men can thatch a rick well, they have as clear a right to the recompense of their peculiar skill as your grace has to the rents of your estates. If the pay they are enabled by their paucity of numbers to obtain be disproportionate, others will speedily learn their art, and reduce the exorbitancy. There are not too many of such wholesome temptations in the labourer's way. He is more at the employer's mercy than any other toiling class. His condition is the lowest of all those who work to live. The labour-market will right itself—at least, as against the labourer—soon enough, without the interposition of your prizes and bribes to force down the worth of any kind of skilful toil. Let the serfs make hay for themselves while the sun shines; seldom does it shine for them. Your rick-thatchers are not emancipated negroes, to be swamped by hill coolies. Their little monopoly of straw architecture is a natural one, and not created by legislative interference. Leave it untouched as long as Nature wills; it is a fair advantage. If it makes the farmers pay a little, it robs none of their bread or their rights.

Think, Duke of Norfolk and Earl Marshal of England, —think of the little pig whom you fed with raw and rotten potatoes, till, as you say, "he was affected in his bowels; but he got over it." You relented then—doubtless partly from pity, though partly from the price of pork. You then, as you told the prize labourers, "thought piggy should have some better food, and gave him some barley-meal." Though you cannot make pork of the thatcher, yet think of him as a pig whom circumstances have advanced from mouldy potatoes to barley-meal. Exert not the influence of your wealth and station to drive him back towards the Andover dietary. Piggy might have been worse if fed on putrid marrow and green gristle. The daintier diet of pauper hunger, the raw potatoes for which women scramble, gave him the cholera. Oh, that labourers were but eatable! Could thatchers be pickled and salted for profitable consumption, you would not begrudge their barley-meal. You offer no premiums for keeping down pigs to rotten potatoes. You have learned to draw distinctions, like the Duke of Richmond. "We grow timber, but we do not grow glass," said his grace. And your grace responds, "We sell and eat pigs; but we do not sell and eat rick-thatchers."

I know nothing of the merits of the proposed "Dorking, Brighton, and Arundel Atmospheric Railway;" it may have all the demerits in the world; and if it have, fair play is nevertheless its right, and the abstinence from all unfair hostility a moral obligation. Your grace appears, by the following advertisement, to be of a different opinion:

"*To the Editor of the 'Times.'*

"Sir,—Understanding that it has been generally reported that I am not opposed to the Dorking, Brighton, and Arundel Atmospheric Railway, I think it necessary to state that I am determined to oppose it in every way I may think most likely to be successful.

"*Arundel Castle, Sept.* 27, 1845. Norfolk, E.M."

I merely quote this as a specimen of your grace's *morale*. It is tarred with the same stick as your threats against the rick-thatchers. You forget what is due from man to man. You exact more than justice from the consumer; you would grant less than justice to the helpless producer. You exhibit the anti-Christian spirit of the Corn-Law monopoly. You "give yourself great airs," and, so

far as you are concerned, I wish the atmospheric apparatus may pump them out and leave the natural vacuum. Your system tends to change rick-thatchers into rick-burners. Your assumption, like your farms, is "not neatly fenced," but straggles about in mischievous luxuriance. Be content with giving pigs the cholera, and putting your pork at a discount: the public can choose whether they will purchase the fattening of your diseased potatoes. But do not screw your thatchers down to starvation point, nor rob them of the niggard advantage given by the laws of political economy, while you retain for yourself the ample spoil conferred by the laws of a class monopoly.

No. XLV.

To Tenant-Farmers.

October 11, 1845.

The useful and honourable occupation in which you are engaged ought to be a profitable one. A people's food-producers have a natural claim on its grateful and liberal regard. You should not be rewarded grudgingly. Nor is there any disposition in the inhabitants of this country to undervalue your toils or to repine at your successes. They are not such fools. It is not expected by them that any body should work without pay. They know that no stuffs are so needful as bread-stuffs. They sing "Speed the plough" for their own sakes. They are also ready to admire the triumphs of industry; they like to see it rising to wealth and station: the gratification is certainly not diminished by the intimate connection of such success with their own means of sustenance; and some strange disturbing force must intervene before the sight of fortunes made by farming is otherwise than a pleasure to the public.

In the natural course of things you are, then, the objects of sympathy and respect. Your toils are associated with our enjoyments. The more you work, the better we

fare. And there is a further bias in your favour. Your occupation, in itself, is alien from tricks of trade. It seems remote from the gambling and overreaching of which commerce is accused in some of its operations. You labour with nature's materials. The fertile earth is your factory. You live in the eye of heaven. What you realise is the meed of skill and patience, and not the lottery prize of daring speculation. With you, more than in almost any other mode of life, is merit the measure of success. Your lot should be a safe and happy one; alike desirable in itself, and in its social relations and estimation. I need not ask whether you find it so. But if it differ widely from this pleasant picture, you may be wise in asking yourselves how it so happens.

Do not commit so egregious a blunder as to say that manufacturers are malignant, and the League a contrivance for holding you up to hatred. There is no innate aversion to agriculture in human nature for declamatory breath to fan into a flame. There is no popular hostility to you or to your interests. Your injury is nobody's good; your ruin would be nobody's riches. Every tradesman and manufacturer in the kingdom would rather have you as a thriving than as a bankrupt class of customers. There is no old nurse's tale of ghost, hobgoblin, or old bogie more preposterous than the spectre, sometimes raised in broad daylight at your meetings, of manufacturing animosity towards native agriculture.

The great secret of what is most uncomfortable in your position is this: you have been led to identify yourselves with a law alike unjust, pernicious, and obnoxious. By your support of the Corn Laws, you assume a character not less odious than that of the farmer is naturally popular. You present yourselves to the public, not only as cultivators of the soil, but as leviers of taxation. While the supply of our wants is augmented by your land, it is diminished by your law. Your honest labour tends to fill the belly, your dishonest legislation to plunder the pocket. In the one capacity you are the producers of natural plenty, and in the other of artificial scarcity. You make with the right hand and mar with the left. This causes you to appear as starvers, when you should only be seen as feeders. Those who would bless you for the loaf only curse you for its littleness or its

cost. And what has this monopolist identification done for you? Have you reaped a money reward for the iniquity? Has any one of successive Corn Laws made you proportionately successful? Has any one been true to the promises of its proposers? Has any one shielded you from distress and suffering? You know that, as to your profits, all have been deceptive. Under eminent "protection," your trade has become preëminently bad. Many of you are paying rent out of capital, instead of realising profits to purchase the fee-simple of your farms. Under Corn-Law legislation, your brief glimpses of prosperity have been times of national calamity. You have been an alienated class, whose joys were the measure of others' sorrow, and your sorrow of their joy. Your thriving has been the signal of tumult; and your sliding scale has commissioners of bankruptcy at one end and incendiary paupers at the other.

You have sold yourselves to monopoly for nothing. The production of food cannot become a permanently unprofitable occupation, if law does but let it alone. You are sure of the demand. Famine will never be a fashion. Could you grow counties as well as corn, a new county every year would only supply the increase of our population. Consumption is competitive, and the consumers can pay you if the law allows them to work for the world. And you lend yourselves to their hindrance, for fear the world should sometimes pay them with a peck of corn, which you fancy would leave as much of your own unsold. You don't know your customers. A nation's appetite is not easily gauged. With double our consumption of corn, it would not cry, "Hold, enough!" There are the five millions of potato people to come in yet. There is a market for you! Only let the restrictions come down; Free Trade would then raise crops of consumers,—a golden harvest for you. The foreigner must be a clever fellow to feed them cheaper than you can. Who fears lest he should clothe them cheaper? The unprotected cotton or cloth manufacturer hires his factory as you hire a farm. He needs a building wherein to spin his yarn, as you need land whereon to grow your wheat. He calculates prices and profits, and you must do the same. He will not run the risk of being turned out at the year's end, nor should you. He will not have his hands tied up to prescribed processes, nor should you. He will

not engage for a rent estimated by the prices at which cottons are valued in acts of parliament; nor should you be guided by a parliamentary price of corn. Calculate, as he does, by the world's market; measure your rent by your means; find your true and honest position; and neither ships, colonies, nor commerce will render the plough unprofitable.

The great fault-finding with you, of late, comes, not from the League, but from the landlords. Agricultural meetings have become a continual reprimand. One noble president scolds your short horns, and another your high hedges. One says the plough is badly driven, and another that the field is badly drained. My Lord This twits your neglect of guano, and my Lord That is not satisfied with the application of your home-made manure. In every landlord you meet a lecturer. They are as unsparing with you as Mrs. Caudle with her spouse. And you cannot sleep it off. It comes round with the next cattle-show. My Lord Stanley does not deign to look at your prize ox, but he deals you hard knocks. He says, it is your "duty" to feed the population. How stomach you these ethics? How like you to be stuck up, in sight of the League and all the world, like a dunce at school, with a fool's cap on your head, to be lectured on the laws of farming by rent-receiving lords? And what does it all mean? Simply this: that by increased exertion and outlay you are to stave off the repeal of a monopoly, the profits of which never rest with you, but pass over into the pockets of the proprietary. The conductors of no other sort of business are talked to in this way by their landlords. They would speedily be told to mind their own concerns, take their due, and hold their tongues. You can afford to be as independent as other people, when corn sells at its natural price, and the outlay of capital has the security of a lease. If improvement have advanced less rapidly in your occupation than in others, the fault is in the factitious system created by your law-making landlords. They may be hereditary legislators, but they are not hereditary ploughmen. The science and practice of cultivating the soil are not instinctive in its owners. When estates are purchased, agricultural knowledge is not thrown in to better the bargain. All this interference, insolent even when it is not ignorant, if it be uncalled for, is

only a galvanised kicking of monopoly against Free Trade. Farming will elicit skill, energy, and enterprise, when it repays them. Men need no admonition to make the most of their time and money. Give you fair play and equable prices, and you will work your own way, without all this badgering. Profit is the best premium for a well-cultivated farm. You will learn all you want of the mechanical powers when free from the annual turning of the machinery of the rent-screw. Are you not too old for leading-strings? Must baby be petted and patted to be good when it wears top-boots? Every other British class is proud of defying the world's competition. All that any of them claim is a fair field and no favour. So would it be with agriculture, left to itself. It would thrive amongst the sturdiest. But it is disgraced and crippled by this legislative juggling, which, under the name of "Protection," makes a tool of the farmer and a prey of the consumer.

No. XLVI.

To the Right Hon. Lord Stanley.

October 18, 1845.

My Lord,—You have displayed your accustomed vivacity as a speaker in coöperating with those lords and landowners who have taken of late to lecture the farmers at almost every agricultural dinner. The new character of the oratory at these meetings must be rather astounding to plain country people. It has undergone an entire revolution. The farmers are no longer flattered. They are not courted, but corrected. Instead of promises, they are treated with precepts. Instead of cheers for abuse of the League, if they cheer at all, it must be at abuse of themselves. They have put their "friends" into office, and find that the office of a friend is to rebuke. Such is the result of their exertions at the last election. They have tied the twigs, and the rod is on their own backs. Protection was promised them, and now they most need it from their

friends. Agricultural societies are become a great mission for showing how wretchedly the soil of England is cultivated, and for preaching down the ignorance, the indolence, and the prejudices—the narrow means and the narrow minds—of the tenant-farmers.

All this may be very well; but surely they are entitled to ask why you did not tell them so before the last election. Their "crops of weeds" were just as large when you were talking of the corn-crops of Tamboff. You kept the secret till it was exposed by the League; and now you try to turn the undeniable facts, backed with exaggerations, to your own account. You recommend improvement, while yet retaining the system by which improvement is retarded. My lord, this will not do.

To what cause are the alleged deficiencies in the art of cultivating the soil to be ascribed? Mainly to the Corn Laws. You, the authors and upholders of that system, have kept down the independence of the farmer's character; you have sought for a herd of political retainers in your tenantry; you have acted on terror by the threat of ejectment, and you have bribed by the promise of law-created profits. The ignorance and prejudice of which you complain have been your political strength and the weapons of your party warfare. You pretended to shield from competition, which you now desiderate as essential to improvement. For the sake of the Corn Laws, you cherished delusions which have impaired your property. You made agriculture a species of gambling; and now you whine about the lack of capital and industry in the holders of your legislative lottery-tickets. If the tenants be at fault, it is the landlords that have led them astray. If there be reason in your reproaches, it arises from the success of your own temptations. You, my lord, and those of your class, whose policy has deteriorated the agriculture of the country, should be the lectured, and not the lecturers, at association meetings.

At the Liverpool meeting, you descanted on the philosophy of competition; you proved how needful it was for the farmers of Lancashire. You rejoiced in the amalgamation of the Liverpool with the Manchester Association, because "the greater the competition, the greater the range of improvement." If this be true of a district, it is true

of a nation. If it be good for North Lancashire and South Lancashire, it is good for Great Britain and the Continent of Europe. But your Corn Laws are laws against competition. They were professedly enacted to "protect" the farmer from competition. They tie up the mainspring of the agency to which you appeal for improvement. You deny the principle on the broadest scale, while you patronise it on the narrowest. According to your philosophy of motives, human nature is a different thing in counties from what it is in countries. There is a limit at which you hold that good becomes evil. Enlarge the domain of competition from South Lancashire to all Lancashire, and you rejoice. Include the northern counties—a clear advantage. Add the southern—better still. Step an inch over the national boundary, and what was best of all immediately becomes abominably bad. The competition that enriches Lancashire, ruins England. The meeting laughed at your joke of the farmer, whose notion was that "iron ploughs breed weeds." And yet your notion of the iron plough of competition is, that it breeds weeds, should the furrow overpass certain limits of latitude and longitude. You are indebted to the League, or to the political economists whose works are its text-book, for this doctrine of the utility of competition. But you take it without its primary application. If it makes Lancashire farmers, much more will it make British farmers. The world's rivalry is a mightier impulse than the competition of a county. It is the universal power which sets the local power in motion. You advocate the local, and resist the universal. Like the savage who stole a watch, and could not wind it up, you push on the minute-hand of district competition towards the hour of improvement, but neglect to wind it up, without which the balance-wheel has no movement, and the spring gives no impetus.

Your lordship broadly affirms your belief in the capabilities of the soil of this country to support the existing population, together with its increase at the rate of 300,000 mouths per annum. You told the farmers that "it was their duty and their advantage to find the means of providing for that population." The "advantage" must be demonstrated before the "duty" is recognised. Who wants the farmers and their families to become sacrificers for the com-

mon good? Not the League; they wish for that just as little as they desire those same farmers to victimise themselves for the profit of their landlords. The farmer is no more bound than any other tradesman to carry on a losing business, or waste his capital in experimental devices for increased production. His "duty" as a producer is best fulfilled—best for the interests of society, no less than for his own—by the course which most turns it to his own "advantage." The nation has no need that he should use himself up in making bricks without straw. It has no right to impose any such obligation. He will make his farm answer if he can; and if he cannot, there is an end of his duty of feeding the population.

The truth is, there is a bit of "thimbling" policy in this devolvement upon the farmers of the duty of feeding the nation. The pea has been shuffled from under the landlords' thimble. It is to the legislative obstructors of foreign supplies that the population has a right to look for a sufficiency of food. They have virtually, by the Corn Laws, undertaken to furnish a supply. They promised they could and would, if those laws were enacted. They are bound to do so, or to forego their monopoly. Their language in substance was, "Protect us from competition, and we will feed the nation." You have had the protection you asked, and you have not fed the nation; and now you invoke the competition you deprecated, and which you still deny as between nation and nation, to exert its power as between district and district, and stimulate the farmers to make good your own forfeited bond. The manœuvre is as hopeless in economy as it is bad in ethics. That this little island, with its gigantic industry, should be well fed from its own soil, is not in the nature of things; least of all is it practicable without that foreign competition which is essential to the full development of energy and enterprise in any department. Only in the abandonment of restrictions can the entire capability of British agriculture be developed. The competition in which it would do itself full justice is that of the world's north and south, as well as the north and south of Lancashire. You must bring kingdoms into the field instead of provinces; and then increase of population will no longer be a difficulty, but a pledge of increased resources, of augmented power, wealth, and abundance.

The Corn-Law legislators and landlords ought to feel a deep responsibility at the present moment. We have been on the verge of a precipice; we are not yet out of the wood. Even before the extent of damage to the potato crop appeared so fearful, the wheat harvest had placed the country in a critical position. The national supply of food for the coming twelvemonth is not a topic to be disposed of at a Liverpool dinner of farmers from the vicinity, even though the noble Secretary of State for the Colonies be chief speaker and expositor of agricultural duty. The question, my lord, with all its serious and awful responsibilities, belongs to your position as a cabinet minister. You must deal with it, not amongst farmers, but amongst statesmen. Take, then, into the ruling conclave your sense of the duty of feeding the population. If, by negligence and obstinacy, by delay and compromise, what is right and needful be postponed to party considerations and parliamentary tactics, and the possible results of calamity, wretchedness, and crime ensue, on you and your colleagues in the cabinet—with both God and man—devolve the blame. There is no time to lose Precaution should forestall, not only disaster, but alarm. Your lordship would "like to see a considerable increase of iron ploughs." Be it so; but let not—through governmental negligence or timidity—"stern Ruin's ploughshare drive elate" over those whose work and wages, whose daily fare and nightly rest, whose health, morals, and lives, are contingent on an adequate and accessible supply of food for the population.

No. XLVII.

To the Right Hon. Lord Ashley.

October 25, 1845.

My Lord,—The gift of foresight is of little avail without the power of action; it only produces a pitiable exhibition of feebleness. Your lordship predicts the approaching

downfall of the Corn Laws. You admonish the freeholders of Dorsetshire to prepare for their "destiny." You consider it "needless to argue the policy or impolicy of such a change." And having relieved your mind of its prophetic burden, you turn away from the agriculturists of Dorset, whose representative you are, to discuss the hours of labour with the operatives of Lancashire.

Your lordship possesses this negative mark of true inspiration, that you seem scarcely to understand the full import and extent of your own prediction. The decisive sign of the times and prognostic of the coming change is, with you, the agreement of "the leading men of the great parties in the legislature." Others foresaw it while those same "leading men" were agreed in their hostility to Corn-Law repeal. They reckoned on the power of principles, which has only become visible to your lordship when embodied in the influence of persons. You anticipate a "wide and fearful pressure of commercial distress," as the constraining cause of Corn-Law repeal for its relief; and yet you counsel the agriculturists to "consider in what way they can break the force" of that relief. Assuring them that such a course would "be wise," you announce your purpose of not "attending any of their agricultural anniversaries," to assist in reducing this wisdom to practical shape. You hold yourself better engaged with the wants of other classes, for whom the coming change—whether as an improvement or as a deliverance—is undoubtedly propitious.

It is not very long since you professed to stand appalled and self-reproached at disclosures of the wretched condition of the peasantry in your own county of Dorset. Their tattered garments, their coarse and scanty fare, their crowded hovels, present pictures of misery not to be parallelled amongst the cotton-spinners to whom your heart is overflowing. But you leave their guardian angels—if such they have—to guide them through a change which, you say, may be "destructive." You renounce the annual gatherings of farmers and labourers now that the "destiny is fixed" of the Corn Laws. The love of the labourer is waxing cold. The philanthropic anniversary, with its prize ploughmen and toasted thrashers, is involved in the "fixed destiny" of abolition. "It is not likely that you will have

the pleasure this year" of sympathy with the peasantry. No more agricultural "protection," and no more agricultural philanthropy. One would have thought that meetings which can no longer uphold monopoly might still have promoted charity. It was the more prominent topic of the two in the professions of their presidents. No doubt your lordship has some benevolent purpose hid beneath the mystery of this withdrawment at a critical period; but the potato-fed serfs of Dorsetshire must feel it an inscrutable abandonment.

You think you are more wanted in the North. The people are better paid, and consequently better clad, better fed, better housed, better taught, than your hungry and ragged labourers at home. But you are their champion for short hours. Remember, my lord, your prophecy of "the wide and fearful pressure of commercial distress" that is impending. Remember that "our actual prosperity must come to an end." Who will thank you, when that period arrives, for having abridged the operative's right of hiring out his labour and disposing of his time? When loaves become less, and meat vanishes from the table, who will bless your name for the annihilation even of one profitable hour? Think of the mine-women, of whom so many have been punished for evading your law on their behalf! Think of the poor girl who perished by falling down the coal-pit, into which she was endeavouring to steal, in boy's clothes, to earn needful food by forbidden work! Distress can only be mitigated by increased exertion, and would be ill prepared for by a legal limitation of labour.

If your lordship expects commercial distress to be averted by the repeal of the Corn Laws, the case is not less strong against interposition. The factory operatives can make their own terms in prosperous times. Food, cheap and plenty, is to them a Ten Hours' Bill, or an Eight Hours' Bill, that executes itself. It needs no informers or inspectors. Prosperous trade insures better bargains. You may trust the Corn-Law Repeal Act for relief; but why, then, has your lordship always opposed Corn-Law repeal?

You involve yourself in terrible entanglements by declining to look the Corn-Law question fairly in the face. Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell shaken into one do not constitute a "destiny" even for an act of parliament.

If the present law be wise and just, your constituents and the country have a claim on your uncompromising support of it, whatever parties may combine for its abolition. If that law be neither just nor wise, they have an equal claim for your exertions against its continuance. You cannot evade the question of "policy or impolicy," and yet discharge your duty as a legislator. Nay, more, you cannot evade that question, and yet sustain your position as a philanthropist.

In the field or in the factory, the prospect of an ameliorated condition is bound up in the great point at issue. All efficient aid, and all consistent charity, must proceed on the assumption of the policy or impolicy of the Corn Laws. It is a previous question to all others. You assume the repeal to be an evil when you advise the agriculturists to "break the force" of the blow; you assume the repeal to be a good when you describe its inevitable contingency on commercial distress. The same breath blows hot and cold. If the repeal will be no relief to commerce, and even "gradual abolition" be "injurious" to the farmer, it is little in harmony with your benevolent professions to couple such measures with impending calamity, and become accessory to a disastrous national delusion, even though it should be patronised by "the leading men of the great parties in the legislature." If, on the other hand, it be a measure which the prospect of distress ought to render "inevitable," you ought assuredly to reconsider your counsel to agriculturists, that they should diminish the good as much as possible, make "terms" on behalf of an expiring mischief, and save a nest-egg of monopoly for future vivification.

The extent of this question, as one not merely of a particular enactment, but of national policy, seems not to have impressed itself on your lordship's mind. If Free Trade be inevitable, every kind of influence claiming to be useful should direct itself towards rendering the principles of Free Trade all-pervading. It cannot coexist with a system of minute legislation, however kindly in its purposes. The best help to the working classes is that which enables them to help themselves. You might enact that no man shall wear a hat with a hole in it; and if at the same time you enact that he shall not work the hours required for a

new hat, what follows? I know an establishment in which a wholly unnecessary legislative interference about white-washing last year cost the workpeople employed therein no less than 2000*l.* in suspended wages, and did no good to any living being. Such cruel kindnesses are, I fear, not uncommon in the history of legislative philanthropies. They must happen when good gentlemen intermeddle with what in detail they cannot understand. And they must also happen so long as desired and most desirable improvements in the food and clothing of the poor, in their hours of toil, in the cleanliness and wholesomeness of their homes, &c., are not based upon the general improvement of their condition, adequate wages, and full employment. This general improvement might still leave the working classes in need of instruction and suggestion. There might still be occasion to direct, stimulate, and aid their struggles into a better mode of daily existence. A wide field would be open for much of the beneficent enterprise in which your lordship is engaged. Happy results would cheer on philanthropic exertion. The case of the farm-labourer would no longer be so desperate as to be relinquished for a more promising solicitude on behalf of the manufacturing operative. All classes would have vantage-ground to start from in the career of improvement.

However near the termination of the corn monopoly may be, your course, my lord, must needs be one of helping or of hindering. Even in such a change as that, much must be contingent on the spirit in which it is accomplished. Ill would it become you to leave your name associated, in parliamentary records, with what you deem "destructive" or "injurious;" or, on the other hand, to connect yourself to the last with a doomed system, whose existence is incompatible with the kindly purposes to which your life is devoted. You must take a side, my lord. You thwart and falsify all for which you profess to live, unless you take the right side.

No. XLVIII.

To the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart., M.P., First Lord of the Treasury, &c.

November 1, 1845.

Sir,—The time of trial is at hand. Will your law work through the coming winter? Will it secure food for the population for the next ten months? Dare you face the prospect before us, relying on its operation? Are your nerves strung for a responsibility greater than has ever before devolved upon a statesman, inasmuch as you will stand at the bar of public opinion embittered by public suffering? The period is a critical one—most critical—both for yourself and for the country.

Thousands of voices proclaim that the "destiny" of the Corn Laws is fixed. In many cases the champions of their enactment have become the prophets of their destruction. Far and wide has spread the confident anticipation of their repeal. Your path is prepared. All eyes look for your advance. Whatever injury your party or parliamentary influence can suffer by the actual proposition is already inflicted by the common assumption of its certainty. No mischief to yourself, as a politician and statesman, remains to be averted by delay; no further strength is to be gained by delay. The anticipation grounds itself upon your own character and policy, as well as upon the obvious justice and necessity of the case. All things wait for you. It little signifies that parliament is not sitting. The world only wants assurance that you are determined.

Why cling with any foolish paternal fondness to your law? It embodies no great principle. It lays no foundation for a statesman's fame. It will not tell for a stone upon your cairn, nor furnish a sentence of inscription for the pedestal of your statue. You shaped it not for the expression of previous years of inquiry and thought. It was the expedient of the moment—the extempore avoidance of a temporary difficulty. Let it pass away, together with the circumstances of its enactment. It has helped over a transition in our commercial policy. It helps no longer.

Its continuance is only a foreboding of difficulty and disaster.

To the farmer, your law has neither given "protection" nor satisfaction. His only attachment to it has arisen from the dread, now vanishing from his thoughts, of vast and undefined injury in the application of Free-Trade principles. Agricultural societies are becoming occasions for preaching reliance on improvement rather than on protection. Intentionally or not, you have shown to all interested in the land that parliament can neither regulate prices nor secure remuneration. They neither thank nor trust you, but cultivate reliance upon themselves. They look to skill and capital and energy. You have been the occasion of this good,—of bringing them to this desirable state of mind. Its wholesome influence requires security against change. You can only bestow that by fully establishing the policy of Free Trade in corn.

The manufacturers have not been ruined by your law, nor the multitudes pressed down to the borders of starvation. But they have escaped, simply because the bounty of Providence rendered it inoperative. The time has not come—though now the symptoms of its approach are gathering—for it to bring down on your head their hoarded maledictions. Yet this has only been an escape from the more glaring mischiefs of restriction. Trade, though flourishing, has been limited; and the people know it, both masters and men. They keep a keen watch on events. They note the progress of the bearable towards the intolerable. Let your law begin to act strongly on the prices of food,—and in present circumstances it must act strongly, if at all,—and the reaction will be terrible. If you can "never forget Paisley,"—still less will they. Your law seems to them—and it is—an "infernal machine" across their path. In every added penny to the loaf's cost they will behold the lighted fusee that will produce its explosion.

Inferior bread, and a scanty supply of that, is all that protected agriculture has prepared for us. Foreign corn, at enormous prices, must be procured to mix up with it, and fit it for consumption. Yet the badness of the product keeps up to a high rate the importation-duty. The common reserve fails us; and, taking the potato-crop at the

best that can be expected, it is a dreary resource to fall back upon. Europe is in no condition to help us. Some of our own little stock of foreign corn has already been reshipped for Belgium. Apprehension runs before pressure; but the pressure will follow with too sure a step for the apprehension to subside. We have need of all resources, in the Old World and the New, which Free Trade can open to us. You can as yet take time by the forelock. How long will the opportunity last?

The land of England, in its present state of cultivation, cannot feed the people of England—that is demonstrated. The effect of restrictive laws is not to improve cultivation, so that it can feed the people of England—that is also demonstrated. The spirit of agricultural improvement has only sprung into being amid the throes and convulsions of expiring monopoly. Its nurture to maturity will only be found in competition. The juncture demands your change of policy. Home produce must always have its advantages in the home market; and settling into the regular supply of whatever proportion can profitably be raised, the cultivators of our own soil will have a secure trade and a fair remuneration.

The day of temporary expedients is past. A fixed duty would be the most unfixed of all things. Your own blows have demolished that obstacle,—smashed it to atoms. Indian corn may serve to fatten cattle, or may be a resource in the failure of potatoes; but to admit that, and exclude wheat, would be too glaring an attempt at reducing a nation, for the gratification of a class, to a lower species of food. There is corn in the world, and our multitudes can earn it. You have only to strike off this great link in the chain that fetters industry. By your own statement in the last debate on Mr. C. Villiers's annual motion, you hold the principles of Free Trade to be sound and wise, and only require to be guided by circumstances in their application. Since last June circumstances have changed. The series of abundant harvests is broken. Alarm has succeeded to hope. Disappointments have been combined that we are only accustomed to encounter singly. The shadow of a coming period of distress darkens the land. You emphatically claimed then the right to continue the application of your principles,—of abating protective duties.

Stand to your claim. Abate the system by the destruction of the corn-duty. The need of a nation is your warrant. The course of events has only left it for you to speak the word, and demands that you speak it promptly. The expectation is strong and general; the gratitude will be proportionate to the expectation. Rise to the emergency, and win the blessings of an anxious nation.

No. XLIX.

To the Duke of Richmond, President of the Agricultural Protection Society.

November 8, 1845.

My Lord Duke,—The resolutions published by the general committee of the above-mentioned society, dated the 4th instant, are not graced by your name. Your responsibility may be the less apparent,—it is not the less real. Until disowned, every member of that society, much more its president, is committed to the approval of proceedings which the minds of many can only regard with unqualified reprobation and unutterable disgust.

The thoughtful and humane of all ranks, parties, and classes are anxiously contemplating the condition of the country as to its supply of food. They look far and near for the means of averting the most fearful of calamities. Other feelings on public measures are for a time in abeyance. "All mankind's concern is charity," except that of your central society,—and theirs is "protection."

Already numerous meetings have been held—as many more will soon be held—to suggest alleviations, or pray for their prompt adoption, in order to meet the coming crisis. The annalist will have to record that, at a juncture so momentous, one meeting was held for the purpose of taking care that the bread-tax should neither be removed nor abated. President of protectionists, in that fact you are "damned to everlasting fame!"

You call the "apprehension of adequate supply" unfounded. And why? Not because you know it to be so, for you forthwith apply for information to your country correspondents. The assertion is made in confessed ignorance, and then the forms of an inquiry are prescribed for its confirmation. Your local agents cannot mistake their duty. Facts are to be furnished for your assumptions. You question even the deficiency of the potato crops. You are satisfied of nothing and with nothing, but that plunder extorted from contingent starvation which you stimulate and struggle to retain under the veil of "protection" to British agriculture, not less than that at present existing.

There is suggestive falsehood in the terms of your inquiry. You ask whether the crops exceed or are below "an average." You inquire simply of quantity, and not of quality; and, had the instruction been more complete, what would avail the crops being up to an average, the population not being kept down to an average? The wants of progressive increase cannot be met by averages. There are 380,000 more mouths to be filled this year than last. The mouths of last year were not redundantly crammed, though the crops far exceeded an average. This reference to average is sheer delusion.

One clause of your resolution contains what is meant for proof of your professed opinion:

"That it is the opinion of this society that the supply of wheat and other grain in this country is not such as to justify alarm, notwithstanding the efforts so industriously made to impress the public mind with a conviction to the contrary; and that the supply will be found sufficient; since the average prices at the present time barely exceed those contemplated as desirable by the framers of the Corn Law of 1842."

You misrepresent Sir Robert Peel. He never professed to legislate for 56*s*. a quarter as the price of wheat unfit, without admixture, for human food. He never professed the protection of wholesome corn at 70*s*. by a duty of 15*s*. a quarter. And this, as you know, is the present state of the markets. The spirit of his Act is violated by the effect of literal adherence to its provisions. You have more than your bargain. The duty ought only to be 1*s*. The 14*s*. are yours by the partial clumsiness of the machinery. This sharp practice, however, adds little to the enormity of battling for "protection" at all at such a moment.

Corrupt motive is insinuated in the mention of "efforts so industriously made to impress the public mind." Could dishonesty as well as industry have been shown; could the falsification of facts and figures, of quotations and authorities, have been proved upon the alarmists, as they have been proved upon the publications of your society,—you would have felt no delicacy about the production of the demonstration. You would have spoken out plainly. Efforts to ascertain and make the public acquainted with the truth ought to be "industriously made." They need no cowardly or dirty innuendo. Such "protection," my lord duke, is left to your Central Society.

The greatest curiosity in this document remains to be noticed. You suggest a proof of the advantage of "protection" to the community, and that proof is in comparative cheapness. The *verba ipsissima* run thus:

> "That the price of grain being—proportionably with the means of the people—lower in this country than in the above continental states, proves that the protection afforded to the producers of grain in this country is beneficial to the community at large."

The community, then, is benefited by comparatively low prices of grain. "What! can the devil speak truth?" There stands the proposition, clear and distinct, in the manifesto of the Agricultural Protection Society. The question of fact as to relative prices, and the relative means of the people, I pass over. It matters not to the principle whether your assumptions on those points be correct or incorrect. You have linked together the common good and low prices; and you know that low prices are neither the object nor the result of Corn Laws. Low prices are your everlasting objection to Free Trade. Rest the merits of your monopoly where now you have placed them, and debate is brought to an immediate termination. Every thing is conceded. In your words, protection makes confession before execution.

The condition "proportionably to the means of the people" is ingeniously introduced to evade the comparison of actual prices. It suggests many questions. If the people, by skill and industry, multiply the means, is that a just reason for making laws to raise the price of their provisions? If let alone, would not prices be yet lower in proportion to their means, and therefore—by your own

logic—the community more benefited? Have landowners a vested interest in the gains of merchants and manufacturers, and thereby a right to appropriate, by class legislation, a portion of those gains? Who makes the people's means? Are they not enhanced by the extension of industry, and limited by its restrictions? In what plight do the people's means leave millions? What signifies this doctrine of proportion to the potato-eaters? It is a shadowy consolation to the hungry peasant that some continental serf is hungrier than he; and that, while the loaf is three times more than that serf can afford to pay, it is only twice as much as he himself can afford to pay. Cold comfort to the drowning man in twenty fathoms water, that somebody else is drowning in thirty fathoms water! Such comfort brings his grace of Richmond to the pauper peasantry of England.

The Protection Society has lost a chance. At a time when facts sufficiently alarming have been ascertained, and there is a large margin of vague but not altogether causeless apprehension; when a combination of calamity threatens the wealthiest portion of the United Kingdom with hard struggle and sore endurance, and its poorer with the horrors of absolute famine; when accurate knowledge, careful forethought, and prompt action are imperatively demanded; when each man asks his neighbour, What can be done? what is going to be done?—at such a time, the Central Society might have aided other inquiries by calling for facts from its agents without tainting them by "a foregone conclusion;" it might have coöperated with all who, through the length and breadth of the land, are uniting themselves to wrestle with the demon of want; it might have argued that, even if alarm be unfounded, there are no means of allaying it so efficient as prompt measures for the amplest supply that can be obtained; and it might have resolved that no considerations of class interest should stand a moment in the way of the people's food and the people's painful reliance on the future. Instead of so doing, the Central Society seizes this awful moment to "call the attention of all peers and members of parliament representing their interests, or resident within their respective districts, to the necessity of supporting inviolate 'protection to British agriculture, not less than at present existing'"!

In a painting of the Deluge, a whole family perishes because the infatuated grandsire clutches with unrelaxing hand a bag of gold, and thus the bough breaks on which they clung, and which upheld them all above the waters. The type is not complete. It does not appear that the old man's gold was not honestly earned, or that it was extorted by taxation upon human necessities.

No. L.

To the People of England.

November 22, 1845.

At this critical period you are cast upon your own resources. You must think and act for yourselves; there is no one to think and act for you. In the prospect of Irish famine and English scarcity, the people are quietly left to their own devices. Monarchy, aristocracy, and representation, Church and State, privy councillors and cabinet ministers,—all are mute as the grave. The oracles are dumb. Prove yourselves, then, equal to the occasion. Show that you can think and act, and that you will. Be not paralysed by the abandonment. Look onwards, full in the face of whatever probable calamity is coming, and adopt your measures accordingly. There is in you, as I believe, a spirit of intelligence that will not fail, but rise to the emergency, undaunted by the desertion of those whose function is to watch over the public safety, which most assuredly would be perilled by any approach towards public starvation.

Exact knowledge of the existing supplies of food within your reach might at this time have been within your possession, had parliament acceded to the desires of its Free-Trade members. The parties who refused information now cant of exaggeration. They who have legislated for artificial scarcity will tell you there is no scarcity, until the competition of a hungry population wrings out famine prices for their profit. Suppose there is exaggeration, that

fact only enhances the difficulty of your condition. Deficiency—a large deficiency—is certain. The dictate of wisdom is, to make as sure as possible that, whatever its extent, there shall be the means of counteraction. Who can put a great nation upon a workhouse dietary? Who shall say, Thus far may consumption be economised, and the population kept just alive by the reduced and damaged rations in their stores? It may be that the self-appointed feeders of the community can so far supply its wants—at their own prices—as that not more than some few thousands need be actually famished. And it also may be, that even so much is beyond their power to accomplish, and that they and death will reap their harvest together. This is no time for such nice calculations. Those who have once been burned out, with life scarcely saved, will only sleep in peace knowing a fire-escape to be at hand. Let the people of England have their famine-escape in readiness.

While cabinet councils held daily consultations, you quietly awaited the result. There were few who doubted what that result would be; and the disappointment is as deep as the expectation was general. But there was no precipitancy on your part. You did not assume beforehand the indecision of the government, or its temporary indifference, or the ascendency of class interest over a nation's rights and wants. No; you hoped and believed right willingly, until ministers ended their deliberations, and, with no announced determination, dispersed and returned to their rural amusements. Then arose the feeling, that if they would not act, you must.

If those who should take care that you be fed are silent, not so those who take care that your food be taxed. They, too, have deliberated, and their published resolve is for no relaxation. The banner of "protection" is raised in alliance with that of scarcity. As the Somerset report says, "the present season promises to be more remunerative." Yes, it will remunerate the landlord, the gravedigger, and the hangman; it will augment rents and wretchedness; it will tell upon tithes and typhus. There must be ghastly want to realise this golden "remuneration."

The sliding scale has attained the climax of self-falsification in its professed objects. With wholesome food verging on a famine price, it excludes supply; bad corn

must keep down the averages. Were not a wheat-ear grown in the country fit for grinding into flour, the stuff that but serves to thicken hog's-wash would regulate the averages, sustain the duties, and keep the ports closed. Such is the practical working of this nefarious contrivance. Will you hear with patience of trying this machinery again with some further tinkering? Is there any one expedient which you ought to ask for or accept save that most simple and efficient one, of the immediate opening of our ports for the reception of food, from whatever region it can be obtained?

To claim that measure forthwith—not as a temporary arrangement, but as a final policy—is your only prudent course of procedure. Meet throughout the country in your own town-halls, and according to whatever corporate capacity may entitle your voice to be heard. Memorialise Sir Robert Peel, the responsible prime minister of the empire; say that to him the nation looks, not for good intentions, but for efficient action. Demand of him that he be the real as well as the nominal head of the government, or give way to some man of moral courage better proportioned to the emergency. Tell him that all reasonable time for procrastination or compromise is gone; he must decide to be the despised tool of a selfish class, or the idolised leader of a grateful people. If to some "the present season promises to be remunerative," to him it threatens to be retributive. He is made or marred for ever as a statesman by his conduct now. Bid him defy class interests; he cannot fall with a nation at his back; nor can he long stand, if now unfaithful to its righteous claims for safeguards against the worst of public calamities.

And while you meet and memorialise and remonstrate, neglect not the continuance of that good work which chiefly gives power to your resolutions. It was an idle menace when petitions were described as coming from so many thousand men "capable of bearing arms." Let your memorials be from tens and hundreds of thousands capable of being registered. Let them be not only capable, but actually on the registry: they are appended to the death-warrant of monopoly.

The people are not less deeply responsible than the minister. He can only be strong for them as they are

strong for themselves. Reliance on him is a self-betraying confidence. Silently trust him, and he is weak as water. Trust only to yourselves and your just cause. Show him that the hour is come, and the man will not be wanting. The hour will make its man. Only be the nation's will adequately expressed—no pretence afforded for delay by seeming apathy—and that will is certain of agents for its fulfilment. All depends on your duty being done well and promptly. Quiescence at the present moment is treachery and treason. It is now or never for the people of England. Winter and want are on their way, and the cold shadows they cast before them begin to darken the land.

No. LI.

To the Inhabitants of the Metropolis.

November 29, 1845.

Why delay? Why is not the City of London, and Westminster, and every metropolitan borough, already in the field for the instant abolition of that bread-tax of which they ought never to have borne the imposition? Now is the time for its repeal. The natural scarcity of the season combines with the artificial scarcity of the Corn Laws to threaten calamity beyond calculation. The government looks on; the parliament is again prorogued. Let your remonstrances ring an alarum in the ears of a dormant ministry, startling them into sense to hear the prolonged reverberation of a nation's response.

None of the mischief waits. Monopoly is levying its 14*s.* duty. Potatoes—the food of millions—are forced into an immediate sale, which threatens speedy exhaustion of the entire stock. Cargoes of grain leave our ports for Belgium. Rising prices—anticipating the coming pressure—give token of their future enormity. Incendiary fires have reappeared. Time delays not, but marches on relent-

lessly, with augmenting scarcity, commercial confusion, famine, pestilence, crime, and death in his train. The days are numbered in which precaution can avail; too many of them are gone already. Meet forthwith, and declare, with the barons of old, that "justice shall not be delayed."

The succession of meetings at Covent Garden has abundantly sufficed, together with the other efforts of the League, to make the public understand this question. Gatherings of people for instruction are no longer the duty of the day; we are arrived at the point for action. It is not the League that should meet, but London parliamentary constituencies,—the inhabitants at large, wards, districts, parishes,—these are the bodies that now should move. Manchester, Birmingham, and by this time Liverpool, have spoken out; their example will be speedily followed throughout the country. All look for the metropolis to take up its position. You will not fail. Do not procrastinate.

A few days ago I should have said, wait for no political leader. Honour to Lord John Russell that he has superseded both the admonition and the implied reproach. Honour to him for his distinct, unreserved, and manly adhesion to the cause of Free Trade. And again, honour to him for his counsel to the electors of London, that they should join "the unequivocal expression of the public voice," and "unite to put an end to a system which has been proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter divisions among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people."

Can Sir Robert Peel, whose convictions are notoriously with you, confront a party headed by Lord John Russell as a Free-Trade leader? Will he attempt it, if the people once speak out? Must he not be writhing now under a thraldom which, while it degrades him, condemns the country to be governed in opposition to its best statesmen on both sides of the House? It is for you to bid his enslaver "loose him, and let him go." Tell the commander-in-chief that he may wage successful war on the cheroots of a drunken mess-room, but not on the breadstuffs of a famishing nation.

Move promptly—not only for the sake of Ireland, already looking towards its destiny of alms and seaweed—not only for the sake of an agricultural peasantry, whose ignorant desperation will grow by repeated excitement into organised desolation—not only for the sake of manufacturing myriads, whose former misery the premier has confessed is never to be forgotten,—but for your own sakes; for on you will fall a bitter portion of the pressure. Hither is wretchedness soon to find its way. Here will crime seek shelter and opportunity. Disease will riot in your swarming population. Pestilence will grow strong in courts and alleys to invade your streets and squares. Multitudes of you will have to economise, not only your luxuries, but your charities; not only your charities, but your subsistence. In the picture of scarcity, Irish cottages may fill the foreground; but the proud edifices of the metropolis rise in the perspective.

Resolve on nothing less, and take nothing less, than the entire removal of restrictions upon the essential articles of human subsistence. A temporary suspension of the sliding scale will excite no confidence in foreign producers, lead to no provision for future supply, exercise no wholesome influence on the state of trade, and present no obstacle to the speedy recurrence of similar alarms and difficulties. Unless the fetters of industry be struck off now, they are firmly and fatally riveted. Seize this opportunity of emancipation, or live and die the bond-slaves of monopoly. How short has been the sunshine of prosperity that abundant harvests and cheap food bestowed upon the country! How soon has the wheel revolved, and again come round crushingly upon poverty! The world wearies of these fluctuations. It wants sound and fixed principles in commerce, as in all things else. It longs for security against the visitations of scarcity, periodically repeated and artificially produced. Policy, prudence, charity, justice, cry out for change—the only change that can avail—a free importation of food for those who must otherwise stint and starve. Help, people of the metropolis; help, "by petition, by address, by remonstrance;" help, in the name of that common humanity of which you partake, of the country to which you belong, of the Christianity you profess, the justice you venerate, and the God whom you adore.

And while you meet and resolve and memorialise, neglect not that which alone clothes your language with power—the Registration—the County Registration. Your strongest argument against those who yet dream of resistance is—forty-shilling freeholds. That is stronger than the claims of justice or the cries of hunger. It is the *ratio ultima* of peaceful agitation. Never forget, neglect, or postpone it. Let that process move on by the side of all other movement. Better register without remonstrating, than remonstrate without registration.

No. LII.

To E. S. Cayley, Esq., M.P.

December 6, 1845.

Sir,—I have been occupying myself—not very profitably, perhaps—in picking out the facts, real or alleged, in your letter to Lord John Russell. They are not so thick as plums in a Christmas pudding, nor so pleasantly imbedded. But as you affect to "argue for being guided by the practical, cautious lessons of history,"—not its rash and impracticable lessons,—"rather than by the visions, however ingenious; by the conjectures, however specious,—of speculation and the closet,"—I was curious to see the effect of having "no speculation in those eyes" by which vision is repudiated, and of studying lessons of history elsewhere than in "the closet."

Fact the first makes known the secrets of men's hearts, and declares their thoughts and motives, in a manner rather startling from such a votary of the practical and cautious:

"It is only because the landlords and farmers of England, as a body, are convinced that the Corn Laws are for the public benefit, that those laws have always received, and still continue to receive, their unabated support. If they had thought them injurious to the permanent welfare of the people, I cannot doubt that they would have been as ready to repeal them as yourself."

"Unabated support!" Do you never read a newspaper? not even the leading articles of the *Morning Post,* so often dolorous over support abated, and changed into acquiescence in the repeal of the Corn Laws, if not into downright hostility? Have you not yet heard of Lord Ashley's letter or Mr. Escott's speeches? One so ill-informed of external facts should have hesitated to assume the attribute of omniscience, and prate of motives as things known. You affirm too much, in this assertion of the absolute disinterestedness and self-oblivious patriotism of landlords and farmers. Repeat it to them, and not a few will laugh in your face.

Fact the second:

"It is notorious that, with perhaps the exception of Canada and the United States, and possibly Spain and Italy, there is as great a deficiency of wheat in the rest of the world as in England, if not a greater deficiency; and this does not appear to be a casual occurrence."

Be it so; what follows? That we should keep out of the market until scarcity and competition have raised the price upon us, making us pay dearly for delay, and perhaps destroying our chance of supply altogether? It would be more "practical" and "cautious" to provide for ourselves in time. You counsel the certainty of waste in expenditure and the probability of insufficiency of food. You know there is but little to be had, and would have us wait till that little shall be less. You would shun the foreign market like a pestilence, until the corn in it be scarcer and dearer; and when the sellers begin themselves to famish, then you would have us begin to bid and buy. For prudential care, anticipating the morrow, you would have a horde of hungry nations contending, like the Andover paupers, for the last bone with green gristle on it. Timely application for an article that runs short is the plainest lesson of common sense, let alone history.

Third fact:

"When, however, the dearth is general, we cannot be surprised that other countries and their rulers should prevent the exportation of corn to their neighbours, at a time when famine stares them in the face at home; nor need it astonish any one that France, Russia, and Naples, if I remember rightly—for I have the advantage of few or no documents to refer to—have all, on various occasions, taken the pre-

caution of first supplying themselves in a time of scarcity,—a precaution which the people of those, and, I believe, other countries, have on such occasions not unfrequently adopted in despite of their governments, and forcibly prevented the exportation of food."

Of course, the folly of France, Russia, and Naples in "first supplying themselves in a time of scarcity" astonishes you; and you are naturally desirous that Great Britain should do nothing so preposterous. We are forewarned against the evil example. Incredible as it may seem, there is your letter advising us to wait quietly. Let the world help itself to its short commons, and we may come in at last for the nihility that remains. First, you would have us wait till the governments of those countries refuse us; and should they not, you still suggest that the people may forcibly prevent the exportation of the food we desire to buy. Great temptations to delay, are they not? "Do not buy food now; in a short time your neighbours will refuse to sell it, or popular violence will stop its transmission." Such is your advice, coupled with this fact.

Fact the fourth:

"An immediate suspension of the import duties would produce, in all probability, an immediate letting out of bond of a million quarters of wheat; besides, before winter, causing another million quarters to be poured into the market, and thus possibly at once exhaust the foreign supply, to the great aggravation, if there be a scarcity—and if there be no scarcity, then there is still less necessity for the measure—of the deficiency before next harvest."

I will not stay to inquire whether more wheat can come out of bond than went into bond; let that pass. The peril which appals you is the possible addition of two million quarters of wheat to our present stock for consumption. This is your bugbear. It is the fearful "vision" of your closet speculation. Two million quarters! Less by half a million than we imported in 1841, and again in 1842. Only twice the average annual importation of the last thirty years, during which we have added seven million mouths to our numbers. Only one-fourth more than the importation of 1801, when, in Great Britain, we were only ten millions and a half instead of eighteen millions and a half. Awful must be your apprehension of our having too much to eat; and very "ingenious" are your "visions" of ruinous abundance, just after assuring us that in other countries

there is yet more scarcity, their governments meditating prohibitory duties, and their people ripe for anti-exportation riots.

Fact the fifth:

"Take any six weeks since harvest,—when the reported scarcity, if no obstructive principle had been at work, would probably have produced a variation in prices from week to week of 5*s.* or 10*s.* per quarter, as reports vacillated of the prospects of supply,—and what do you see? Scarcely a variation of 2*d.* a bushel, but, instead of it, a steady progression in price, approximating very gradually to that point where the duty virtually ceases, and free importation begins."

Yes, we do see "a steady progression in price." Good wheat has already passed "the point where the duty virtually ceases." The bad will scarcely get there. It approximates so "very gradually," that when it does, we may expect the straw to follow. And, together with this "steady progression in price," we also see the steady progression of privation and distress. When corn is up, crime is up. The sufferings of the manufacturing operatives, and the difficulties of their employers, have commenced. Winter is coming, and work is failing. Some of the petitioners for a Ten Hours' Bill seem likely to have it sooner than they wish. There are those to whom an untimely recollection may occur of your admonition not to be astonished that foreign peasants, in despite of their government, laid violent hands on cargoes of provisions. You look complacently on the "steady progression of price;" it is the relentless march of misery, disease, and death.

Your next fact is largely mixed with fiction:

"Putting the present Corn Law for a moment aside, turn to the effects of four deficient harvests, under a more stringent Corn Law, that of 1828, of which the present is only a modification, with diminished duties,—turn to the diminished harvests of 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831, and see whether the anticipations of our insufficient supply—fourfold more likely, under such repeated scarcity, to be fulfilled at that time than this—were then fulfilled. Rumour with her busy tongue, panic with its prostrate imbecility, were as rife then as now. And what was the result? In no four years in any period of English history, before or since, had we such large importations,—a supply so commensurate with our wants, that those only who took a political interest in the question appear now to remember them, except, indeed, those poor farmers who cultivated what were then emphatically designated the wheat soils of England, full a third of whom, in spite of the protective price afforded by the Corn Law,

were so inadequately compensated for their deficient crops, that with this addition to the pressure of accumulated distress, from the great fall in prices subsequent to the Money Act of 1819, they sunk to the earth to rise no more; and had it not been for the protection thus afforded by those Corn Laws, the stoutest of those cultivators of the wheat soils of England must have been swept away from the face of the land. Thank God! we have still resolution enough to abide by the experience of the past, instead of the infatuation to run headlong into an unknown abyss of a new-fangled philosophy. If the higher duties of the Corn Law of 1828 did not, during four successive deficient harvests, prevent our obtaining a sufficient foreign supply, why should we so much dread the effect of a Corn Law with lower duties in preventing a foreign supply sufficient to meet the deficiency of only one year?"

As an incidental specimen of your accuracy it may be mentioned, that in the four subsequent years of 1839-42 the importation exceeded that of 1828-31 by a million quarters; but in neither case was the supply "commensurate with our wants." You seem to have a short memory for public distress, but you might have recollected the protection ministry being turned out of office. The calamities and consequent discontent of those years brought in the Whig ministers and the Reform Bill. The Duke's Corn Law would not have outlived the change, had the question been half as well understood then as it is now. And yet, with wheat averaging 66*s.* per quarter, you say a third of the farmers were crushed "to rise no more." They had suffered "accumulated distress" from the "money law of 1819." Why, Spackman will tell you that from 1819 to 1827 inclusively wheat had fetched on the average 60*s.* 8*d.* per quarter. From whatever cause the farmers suffered, high prices and protection could not save them. If you are clear-headed enough to be puzzled by the facts, perhaps Messrs. Morton and Trimmer may help you to a solution of the mystery. The moral to be deduced from what remains of truth in your statement is, that what you call a deficiency of food for the people can scarcely occur under any circumstances whatever; you are content, for them, with what drives them to despair and madness; and think that wheat at only 66*s.* is very hard upon agriculture.

I should not, perhaps, reckon among your facts that the wheat crop "is yet believed to be little below the average of the last few years," since this belongs to "the almost

invariable answers, with certain limitations," "so far as you have seen them," elicited by the circulation of ingenious queries. The public will appreciate your benevolence in adding that the "deficiency caused by the potato failure will be in some measure compensated by the unusually large crops of oats, barley, and beans." We are obliged by your not including carrots and mangel-wurzel. You might also have suggested seaweed for Ireland, which the rough wintry weather will cast on shore abundantly. As you sagaciously observe, "to the Irish, open ports would not give the money to purchase corn."

Such are the facts on which you rely in your ludicrous endeavour to answer Lord John Russell. I have taken them without regard to the use you make of them. Your blundering sophistry in arguing, combined with your proved dishonesty in quotation, render you unworthy of admission into the arena of discussion. But, although too deeply disgraced to be tolerated as a champion, you may yet be worth a little cross-examination as a witness.

While I am writing, the announcement of the *Times* that the victory of humanity is won peals on the ear like a signal to cease firing. But I cannot spare you. Had you merely advocated to the last, by honest mistake, those pernicious and accursed Corn Laws, or any other system of wicked and pernicious policy, it might have been so. Your offence is heavier. Misstated facts, distorted quotations, and endeavours to act on the public mind, or that of a class, by representations too discordant to cohere in the writer's own mind, are not to be forgotten, though the Corn Laws be repealed. Until the employment of such means shall bring its rightful measure of discredit upon public men, there is no hope of restoring the identification of politics and patriotism, or of rendering political controversy truthful and honest, though it may be earnest and impassioned.

No. LIII.

To the People of England.

December 27, 1845.

If there was occasion to say to you a month ago, "Rely on yourselves," not less occasion is there now to repeat and urge that admonition.

Whatever else may have been the occupation of those who govern, or who might, could, or should govern the country, they have hitherto done nothing for you. The precious weeks of preparation for encountering the coming evil have been wasted in squabbles, of which we know little more than the nothingness of their result. We have had two prime ministers *in posse*, and not one *in esse*. Between the party leaders and their adherents there have been many "interviews," but neither has faced the perils of the country. One day we have been told of the obstinacy of this great man, and the next of the crotchetiness of that great man, and still the ports remain closed and the parliament not assembled. People of England, you are trifled with,—egregiously trifled with! Your public servants have been playing tricks with each other, when they should have been securing your interests. You might have been helped, and you are not helped. All the explanations in the world cannot explain away that fact. Time is lost, and the work of that time is not done; nor is it yet to be done. Parliament was to have met on Tuesday, and is prorogued for three weeks longer. Within those three weeks the Corn Laws might have become a nonentity. The strength of your determination is not yet recognised. You must speak out plainer and louder.

The delay gives time for monopoly to rally its forces. Landlords are calling to the tenantry they have cajoled, and whom they can coerce as the power of cajolery passes away. You have now to do with men who have outlived argument, and who are simply in the field for a sordid interest, which they are resolved to defend to the last.

There is no mistake. Reasonings, sufferings, impending calamity, move them not. They will have their bond —"the law allows it"—though the knife cut "nearest the

heart" of industry and poverty. Economists argue in vain, prudence warns in vain, wretchedness weeps in vain, and statesmen remonstrate in vain. They defy all power but yours. They have braved that hitherto with insolence, real or affected. We must fight out this challenge.

Lord John Russell declines to be your minister for the governmental proposition of Corn-Law repeal. He will support it; we may, after his letter, safely rely upon him for that. His inducements to stop at that point will be judged when they are authentically known. Thus much is plain: the outburst of enthusiastic confidence which hailed his understood acceptance of office as the Free-Trade minister was not a sufficient power in his estimation to overbear the obstacles in his way. That ready and prospective popularity was not enough; not, though backed by all the electoral advantages recently obtained in the registration. The full significance of this insufficiency—to his perception—remains to be ascertained. Prejudge nothing. Only take this inference to yourselves,—the steam is not so up as to carry the train to its destination. What is it that politicians would have the people do? When will they be satisfied with your demonstrations? Must they have monster meetings? must they have millions subscribed? All will come in time, but it were well to supersede the necessity.

You are again waiting the mysterious budget of Sir Robert Peel. He avoids now, as formerly, subjecting his measures to previous discussion. Surprise is his delight, and in matters that require deliberation surprise is usually sought for the purpose of delusion. "Open your mouth and shut your eyes," may do for times of sport, but not for times of scarcity. All mankind agree that Sir Robert Peel is not to be trusted. The monopolists felt that long ago, but were content that he should play the rogue for them, so that he did not play the rogue, or worse, with them. You require to be served straightforwardly. The choice is with himself. We cannot hope much, or he would not only have made it, but made it known. Perhaps he will produce some concatenation of measures,—a Chinese puzzle-box instead of a loaf. Be prepared for any trick, and stick to your demand of repeal—simple, total, and immediate.

An extraordinary suggestion is abroad, of giving some-

thing to the class which has mulcted you so long, under the name of "compensation." Your freedom from bread-tax to be purchased of the land-owners—like negro emancipation of the slave-owners—by public money! This would be distinctly treating you as slaves, whose industry is the property of the landed aristocracy. A fee-simple in your food is substantially the same thing as a fee-simple in your bones and muscles. You are the parties to be compensated. Past robbery is a bad pretext for future spoliation.

Whether a brief and fierce struggle or a protracted agitation is before us cannot yet be told. For either, Manchester has given the signal of preparation. The meeting at which 60,000*l.* was subscribed towards the quarter-of-a-million fund indignantly scouted the notion of compromise. We must have repeal, total repeal, and nothing but repeal! No Siamese twins,—one holding a loaf for the poor, and the other a tax-paper for the advantage of the wealthy! No more of Peel's mixtures, mutually neutralising measures, making a compound which is neither food nor physic. Untax our provisions; that is the single act which parliament has to accomplish, and for which agitation will wax stronger and stronger until it be accomplished. We rely on no statesmen or partisans. There is a power to which that of Peel and Russell, of statesmen and nobles, of wealthy classes and legislation houses, is but as the dust of the earth, and that Power helps those that help themselves.

No. LIV.

To B. Hawes, Esq., M.P.

January 3, 1846.

Sir,—Your speech to the electors of Lambeth, at the meeting on Tuesday evening, is a masterly summary of the arguments against the food monopoly. The declaration that you are determined "cordially and faithfully" to sup-

port the "unconditional repeal of the Corn Laws," is an appropriate pendant to such a speech. That declaration amounts, in my apprehension, to a distinct "pledge" upon the question. You cannot recede from it without dishonouring yourself, unless, at the same time, you place your seat afresh at the disposal of your constituents.

According to the report, you were thus understood at the meeting. The elector who questioned your colleague at first avoided any similar appeal to yourself, on the ground that you had rendered it unnecessary; and when afterwards he adopted a different course, it was apparently only to avoid making any invidious distinction between the two representatives for the borough.

I cannot imagine that you consider a promise less binding when it is given unasked for, than it is if given after being asked for. "I will support the unconditional repeal of the Corn Laws"—that is what, by the report, you did say of your own accord; and that is also what, by the report, you refused to say, when a constituent inquired whether you would do so. Not having been present, I cannot say whether the questioner's manner was respectful. Nor can that much signify. It was as the voice of the meeting that he put the question; and it was not to him individually, but to the meeting, that your answer was required. Thoroughly acquitting you of any mental reservation in your declared purposes, relying on you as firmly as if you had sworn to Corn-Law repeal upon the holy gospels, I cannot but think that you have drawn a distinction unmeaning in your own case, but not without both meaning and mischief in the case of many others who may follow your example.

The Reform Bill was carried by a pledged parliament. Its triumph would have been much less secure had the electors been satisfied by candidates promising that they would deliberate and inquire and exercise their discretion. They were sent to pass the Bill. Just so, at the next election, must they be sent to repeal the Corn Laws. The Free-Trade constituencies will stultify themselves egregiously if they return members of whose conduct any doubt can exist. In such a prospect, it would well become those who, like yourself, may claim confidence in their consistency, to set the example of cheerfully coming under obli-

gations which, as to others, are far from being always unnecessary. You deprive them of excuse for equivocation. You help to insure the identification between the elected and the electors. If such as you are ready to pledge yourselves, who can demur?

There was a disposition in the elections, immediately after the Reform Act, ridiculously to multiply pledges. The absurdity cured itself. A representative legislator must have a large discretion to be of service to the country; not because he is often likely to hear in the House of Commons what will change his opinions,—how many such conversions do you remember?—but because the representative has often to deal with unforeseen circumstances; and the application to those circumstances of the principles he holds may require deliberation. But there are certain specific and paramount questions about which no such reservation need exist. Such was Parliamentary Reform. Such is Corn-Law Repeal.

It is beside the mark to talk of going to the House of Commons "in a deliberate character," and of hearing arguments, and of the landlords' refusing to discuss with you if you are pledged,—they not being qualmish themselves about pledges,—after telling the world so plainly, as you have done, of your fixed determination. Your mind is made up. Nobody doubts it. After your speech, it would be an insult to suppose that any landlord can persuade you to vote for prolonging the food monopoly. Were it possible for you to profess such a conversion, who would believe you sincere? Not yourself, even.

Your free-born indignation is misplaced. You bind yourself as much as, on your own account, any body wants to bind you. But let us take the question somewhat more broadly.

It is not a party question. The coöperation of all parties is honestly invited and cheerfully accepted. Had Lord John Russell succeeded in forming an administration, the free-traders, as such, would not have been committed to the support of his government an inch further than is implied in the repeal of the Corn Laws. So far they are ready to support Sir Robert Peel's government whenever it will go so far. They are not a section of the Whig opposition. They do not aim at "ejecting the Tories from

office;" at least, so long as a Free-Trade administration—which might be either Whig, Tory, or both—appears impracticable. The chairman of your electoral meeting was a Free-Trade Tory. There are many such. The union for this object is honourable and patriotic; but it destroys the security which party ties give the electors for the consistency of the elected. Whig electors, and Tory electors too, have a right to demand that they be not made party tools of. They go up to the hustings to poll, not for Whiggism or Toryism, but for Free Trade. They have a bond which is paramount to party; and that is what they desire of those whom they elect. They require that there should be no reservation in favour of the parliamentary tactics or interests of either political party. How are free-traders to secure this paramount consideration for the question which they deem paramount? Your chairman gives the plain answer, "I have pledged myself to vote for no one but a man who will vote for an abolition of the Corn Laws." Well said, honest Tory; and let every honest Whig say the same. That is the spirit which will carry the elections. The object can only be worked out by pledging the candidate. Dishonest men, no doubt, will take pledges; let honest men take them also, and then the electors will only have to choose between honesty and dishonesty. But let a candidate be in ever so high a repute for integrity, if he refuse this simple test of his purpose, his very integrity breeds suspicion of his not exactly intending to do what is wanted. It is subordinate, in his mind, to some other consideration. The constituencies should leave no such uncertainty. There is "ample room and verge enough" for discretion on other matters. On the repeal of the Corn Laws, they should be "bound hand and foot;" and let the candidates say, if they like, that "it is of no use talking to them." We want members to whom it is of no use either for landlords or party lords to talk. We want, in short, the thing done; and the simplest way is to send to parliament those, and those only, so far as we can, who will undertake to do it.

Whether the "leaders of the League" would or would not have approved what passed at the meeting, I am incompetent to say. But I misunderstand them very much unless they approve the determination of electors,

whether Whig or Tory, to make their votes contingent on the candidates' going for the immediate, total, and unconditional repeal of the Corn Laws.

No. LV.

To the People.

January 10, 1846.

In the speeches and writings addressed to you in the Corn-Law discussions, two new words have made their appearance,—"compensation" on the one side, and "unconditional," coupled with "repeal," on the other. The introduction of such terms shows that the controversy is approaching its conclusion. The suggestion of compensation is the anticipation of defeat. It evinces that the retention of the food monopoly is felt to be desperate. And when Free Trade flings back the term "compensation," and hurls after it that of "unconditional repeal" into the camp of the enemy, the implication is clear that the season for any kind of compromise is gone by, and that the full accomplishment of the object aimed at is within the people's grasp.

The probability is, however, by no means small that a parliamentary attempt will be made to gain something from the public purse for the landowners, on occasion of repealing the Corn Laws, and that "compensation" may be found a convenient term to cloak the knavery. The pettifogging spirit which raised the loud debate will not be nice about any means for turning legislative measures to account. And Sir Robert Peel is not incapable of trafficking with such sordidness. Various feelers have been put out by certain journals,—speculations upon the transfer of county rates to the consolidated fund; the repeal of the malt-tax, &c. &c. And these suggestions never stand on their own merits, but are coupled with the hypothesis of a repeal, or a great modification, of the Corn Laws. Be forewarned, therefore, against attempts at mystification. See that repeal be not

thrust into bad company. You have struggled after it for its own sake. You want no villanous appendage to it. Let it come "alone," or it will not be "in its glory."

"Compensation!"—the word accuses you of wrong. It supposes you the perpetrators of an injury. It is fraught with imputation and insult. But you mean no man wrong, nor any class. Your opponents, and not yourselves, have given the struggle any appearance which it may chance to wear of a warfare upon the landed aristocracy. The value of land cannot fail of being eventually enhanced by the influence of Free Trade. So taught the great masters of political economy; so urged the first movers in this agitation, and with no lack of sincerity or of argument. Proof has been given of the fact abundantly sufficient to convince the *bonâ fide* proprietor, would he but listen to you, rather than to the nominal landlord of mortgaged acres. He might then see the absurdity of compensation for a benefit; of asking to be bribed to the reception of an advantage; and of mixing his case up with that of the spendthrift, who may fairly be sent to seek his compensation in the wisdom taught by baffled fraud and self-created difficulties.

Should this question of "compensation" be mooted, a preliminary inquiry must be insisted upon into the incidence of taxation upon different classes. The burdens upon the landowners must be calculated, and the burdens upon other people, especially upon those who labour. The legacy and stamp duties must be investigated; the modes of assessing to the income-tax; the immunities as to dogs, horses, bricks and tiles, and fifty other items; and, above all, the pressure of the whole system of indirect taxation upon the poor millions, rather than upon the wealthy thousands. Before stirring such a topic, let the landlords calculate what can compensate them for the exposures of this investigation. Its avoidance would be a cheap bargain at the cost of all they are ever likely to gain by the Corn Laws.

A marvellous degree of effrontery is implied in the suggestion of "compensation." The monopolists have for thirty years abused the sacred powers of legislation, turning to their private advantage functions only allowed to exist for public good; and they ask for compensation! They have deprived industry of its right to expend its own earnings, turning back from our ports the food it craved to

purchase; and they ask for compensation! They have interrupted and thwarted the progress of national prosperity, aggravated the fluctuations of trade, reduced honest employments to gambling speculations; and they ask for compensation! They have upheld their law-created scarcity in the face of an increasing population, and a suffering population; they are answerable before God and man for the stimulus thus given to disease and crime; and they talk of compensation! It is for them to render compensation, were that possible, not to receive it; and to be thankful that you require not at their hands such equivalent for the past as justice would award.

There are persons whose intellect, or whose *morale*, is of such a calibre, that the notion is not yet driven out of their heads of this being merely a squabble of classes whose interests are capable of adjustment and pecuniary compromise. The League, they tell you, consists of certain Manchester cotton-spinners, who want to get rid of their stock. These cotton-spinners, they opine, hire lecturers and writers to abuse the landowners, on the speculation, by Corn-Law repeal, of selling calico enough to realise a balance in cash with which to purchase some of the land their tricks have cheapened. The notion of "compensation" fits in well with these theories of noodledom. "What will you give us, of the public money, to let you have a market for your surplus bales?" Such is their implied overture to the supposed cotton-spinners. They know not what a national policy is, unless it be the policy of getting all they can out of the nation. They think there is only a civil action against them for damages, instead of an indictment for the abstraction of property, the corruption of manners, and the destruction of human life. They fail to perceive that no cotton-spinning interest could have laid hold of the public mind,—could have stimulated the pulsation of the common human heart,—could have called forth exertions so laborious, and contributions so munificent,—could have pervaded all classes, from the peer to the peasant, and have commenced the creation of a political power that overrides all party organisation and demarcation,—unless allied with elementary principles of truth, right, sympathy, and humanity. And so they twaddle of compensation and compromise. It is something too much that you, in your

consciousness of the growth of this cause in your own minds and around you; in your familiarity with the lucid arguments and accumulated facts that have matured your conviction; and in your recollection of the fearful scenes of want and misery that have harrowed your sympathies and confirmed your determination,—should be invited to accept so pitiful a version of your efforts, and to act upon it by compromise and compensation. Some of these persons trace their pedigrees to the time of the signing of Magna Charta. Tell them that the demand of the barons of England then was that justice should not be denied, delayed, or sold; and that such is now the demand of the commons of England.

No. LVI.

To Richard Cobden, Esq., M.P.

February 7, 1846.

Sir,—The end of your mission of agitation is in sight. When Sir Robert Peel named the 1st of February 1849, he fixed a date which the Corn Law will not survive. The period of its existence may be diminished,—cannot be extended. He may amend his own scheme, or others may amend it for him. The ensuing debates may issue in various changes of measures or of men. We may witness in the interval new parliaments and new administrations. The political world is entering a temporary chaos, and who can foretell the exact point at which it will emerge? But when, for a doomed law, the day of execution has been thus named, the hypothesis of its prolongation becomes in the highest degree improbable. Not to die by that time will be to live for ever; and this for the Corn Law is an impossible alternative.

At latest, then, on the 1st February 1849 your foot

will be on the corpse of the monster which you have fought as manfully as St. George did the dragon. Perhaps much sooner. The keenness of your eye is not abated, nor the vigour of your arm; and if home-thrusts, wisely directed and ceaselessly repeated, can more promptly rid us of the desolating nuisance, it will not live out its little span. You will stay the contortions of its dying agonies. We shall behold you foremost in the struggle of principle, which will precede that of political expediency; and you will prove to the legislature, as you have proved to the farmer, that not only justice and humanity, but prudence and policy, call for the immediate, rather than the protracted, abolition of the Corn Laws. In the approaching and final conflict, men's eyes are on you, in the assured reliance that you will neither compromise any sound principle nor forego any public advantage.

You have brought us to the beginning of the end. The confessed impossibility of a protectionist ministry, the adoption of total and immediate repeal by the Whig party, and the stammering petition for only three years' delay by the, now, Conservative repealers,—these facts are decisive of your success; nor can all the dust raised by ducal bluster obscure their significance. Your car of triumph may be prepared. The laurels will not have time to lose their freshness.

Readily will the confidence you have inspired respond to any call the occasion may require for public coöperation. Petitions for hastening and bringing on at once the termination of the evil, so long and loudly protested against, are daily receiving their multitudes of signatures. In the observance of your part of the work we have guidance and motive to the fulfilment of our own. Seeing you so watchful, we cannot sleep; seeing you so active, we cannot be inert. By whatever coöperation is desired now, we earn our title hereafter to express the just appreciation of your services.

Those services have been rendered by the sacrifice of all that constitutes life to many,—by the large invasion, and, at times, the entire absorption, of your hours of profitable occupation and domestic enjoyment; by exertions in which both the physical fatigue and the mental activity seem beyond the ordinary standard of human endurance;

and by the yet higher qualities of extended sympathies, conciliating sympathy; of calmness indomitable by the roughest and rudest assaults; and of a beneficence of spirit ever in harmony with the beneficent principles you advocate. And there is attached to them a yet more important value: the moral of your success deserves the people's study; you have purchased no party aid by compromise; you have fawned for no titled patronage; you have stooped to no popular delusions; by no sinister arts have you sought to aggrandise a power that might be wielded for your own purposes. Faith in the might of knowledge and of truth has been your talisman, unpolluted by foreign admixtures. Hence the influence which you—heretofore an obscure tradesman of Manchester—superciliously assailed on your entrance into public life, given over for crushed and annihilated by the devotees of party connection—hence the influence which you have exercised towards achieving a revolution in the commercial policy of the country; a bloodless and blessed change, alike resplendent either in comparison or in contrast with all recorded revolutions.

Let the trading and middle classes of England revolve that lesson in their inmost souls. It is a revelation to them of their own capabilities. It bids them "venerate themselves," and deserve their own veneration. Servility, inertness, and sordidness, the juggle of care for a family into neglect of the community, the keeping a conscience for private use and not for public duty, the waiting for Providence in the shape of aristocratic guidance or popular sanction, the faith in great men rather than great principles, and all the thousand sophistications by which people become their own degraders, and reconcile themselves to degradation and uselessness, are for ever shamed by your example in this agitation. All such may learn now how to do something and to be something worth being and doing in the world.

Enough may still remain of the strife with monopoly to bring these qualities into exercise. The means of maturing them, even in the quietest times, can never be wanting. Whatever sustains them is the "daily bread" of intellectual and moral life. In the final efforts to be now made, and for many a long year after, they will not fail to be invigorated by the study of this agitation, and eminently by your

share of its conduct and its triumph. Posterity will have the means of blending the moral lesson with the material benefits. Your name is safe for history.

No. LVII.

To John Bright, Esq., M.P.

February 28, 1846.

Sir,—About the time when these words are passing through the press you will probably be giving a vote which will help to "lay the domination of the aristocracy in the dust."

That phrase will not be forgotten by your enemies, nor, I trust, by your friends. It is too practical not to be memorable; it is prophecy as well as precept. The forty-shilling franchise is the weapon you recommended as capable, in case of need, of accomplishing this prostration, and that is henceforth the people's weapon against all unjust and injurious "domination" on the part of those who prove themselves inaccessible to fact and argument, and who uphold, by the insolence of power, laws which tend to the plunder of industry.

The man who lost his temper, and was consoled by the assurance that it was a very bad one, typifies the section of the aristocracy to which you alluded. The "domination" which denies bread deserves to be in the dust. Its possessors should repeat Archbishop Tillotson's ejaculation over the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, and "wish to heaven they were well rid of it." It alienates them from the community, robs them of respect, paralyses them for good, attracts hatred and contempt, associates their names with sophistry and rapacity, and identifies them with the cause of scarcity, of crime, and of disease. Morally, and in every sense except the most sordid one, such domination is a damnification.

The labourers have long been laid in the dust by this domination. As it succumbs, they will revive, and bless the helping hand that raises them by its prostration. Your name is greeted with the grateful shouts of the toiling and starving serfs of Hampshire. Nor is that the only justification which events have conferred upon your language since its utterance. Think of three weeks' speaking against time with famine in his train. In this prolonged debate lives have been sacrificed by speeches, as surely as if words were the deadliest weapons. A thus far dominating minority has secured a three weeks' march in advance for scarcity and pestilence. That domination will bring destitution to the dust. Is more justification required? Look at the "unnatural combat;" the father warring upon the son, and seeking the destruction of his fair name and honourable position. We had before seen brother discarding brother, and a constituency submitting to become the agents of fraternal wrong. Scenes like these in Christian England call for interposition. They are the works of a demon, who must be ejected and laid in the dust or the Red Sea,—no matter where; and for whom you have found the best exorcism in the forty-shilling franchise.

Peace and philanthropy have ever characterised the religious body to which you belong, and the weapons of your warfare are not unworthy of their Christian spirit. You could destroy the bad of aristocracy by the good of democracy. You propose to vanquish a wrong by the power of a right. You exhort the many to emancipate themselves politically, that they may achieve a moral emancipation for those whom cupidity or ignorance has enslaved. The banner of such warfare is the white flag of peace, its sword the keen point of argument, its battalions the well-marshalled array of facts, its artillery the thunder of a people's cry, and the domination which the victory lays in the dust a wrongful power over human food, not less pernicious for its authors than for its victims.

Associated with Mr. Cobden in toils long to be remembered, speedily be your name blended with his in the most memorable of triumphs ever achieved by peaceful agitation. On you especially has devolved the exposure of the doers of an enormous wrong, and the claim of sympathy for the suffering. Not merely in the technical language of reli-

gious classification, but in the broadest and best sense of the word, society knows you for a "Friend." On the wide plains of Wiltshire, or the quiet downs of Hampshire, the grateful recognition of your exertions blends with that which is breathed amid the busy clatter of your own Rochdale factories. Nor is your energy exhausted in the success now so nearly achieved. You are already labouring in another field of usefulness. In the Game Laws there is another form of crime-engendering domination which you have also to lay in the dust. Spare it not; but from winning freedom for industry proceed to win also protection for the farmer and the peasant.

No. LVIII.

To George Wilson, Esq.

Sir,—With whose name can I more appropriately close this series of letters than with that of the Chairman of the Anti-Corn-Law League? With you, that chairmanship has been no merely formal and honorary office. Yours has been a real presidency, both in the crowded meeting and in the council-chamber. The public has become accustomed to a sway always efficient and never obtrusive. The densest multitudes have been hushed into stillness by the waving of your hand; and the quiet tones of your voice, while you were making statements always most lucid, or enforcing principles ever most important, have never failed of insuring eager attention and prompt response. The still rarer aptitude for direction and organisation which induced the Council to place you at its head, can only be in any degree appreciated by those who have inspected the arrangements at the principal League offices; and have discovered in them a perfectness of order, and a facility for dealing with the most multifarious combinations, well worthy of imitation in the *bureaus* of an empire. Fully to appreciate

your worth in the functions you have discharged, required that familiarity with the foresight of your suggestions, the readiness of your resources, the calmness of your temper, the soundness of your judgment, and the determination of your character, to which they who have enjoyed it most bear the strongest testimony. Partaking in that general quiescence which has been deemed the fittest policy since the introduction of the Corn and Customs' Bills into Parliament, I have ceased to occupy my wonted place in this journal, except in the letters on the approaching close of their heroic labours addressed to Richard Cobden, Esq., and John Bright, Esq.; and now that the conclusion has actually and happily arrived, I have only, as one of the millions for whom the victory has been achieved, to record, in connection with your name, a final expression of gratitude and gratulation.

The peculiar character of the agitation over which you have presided will command the attention of future historians. It was the first of its kind; may the wisdom of the ruling classes allow it to be the last! No violence has stained its course. No party alliances have been purchased by unworthy compromises. No base tendency has been appealed to for the exercise of intimidation, or the accession of seeming strength. The great agency has been that of instruction. The power relied upon was truth and justice. No prejudice has been flattered, whether of the few or of the many. Zeal has been directed in channels sanctioned by morality and known to the institutions of our country. Only wise, just, and beneficent means, valuable in their immediate and incidental as well as in their direct and ultimate result, have been employed for the accomplishment of a wise, just, and beneficent end.

That end is attained. The royal sanction—noblest act of Queen Victoria's reign—is given to bills which avowedly constitute Free Trade the policy of the country. The cries of the destitute are heard and answered. The speculations of philosophers have grown into practical realities. Relieved from artificial pressure, the springs of industry will soon play freely. Labour receives the charter of its rights. Unfounded apprehensions fade away like shadows in the dawning. A great example is given to the nations. They are invited to that unrestricted interchange which makes

the teeming earth and the productiveness of human art subservient to the universal good. Free Trade, spreading over the world, will become the pledge of peace and the bond of brotherhood. Let the moral, as is its tendency, follow the material good, and the earth will rejoice in the renewal of the primeval benediction.

The instruments and agencies of this change have done their work, and will pass away. The League may be dissolved; but what shall dissolve the memories of that season of anxious consultation, of harmonious coöperation, of strenuous effort, of heartfelt unity, of sincere devotedness? or of those mighty and unprecedented gatherings, when the popular mind expanded under the growing light of knowledge, and the popular heart vowed itself to the cause of mercy and of justice? The history of the League is a bright and affecting chapter in the philosophy of humanity. It comprises much to make us love our fellow-creatures, and reverence in them our common nature.

Until the new laws have thoroughly established themselves, by their tried and satisfactory operation, some danger, though I trust but slight, must remain of attempts to revert to exploded monopolies. On you, sir, the public will rely for watchfulness; from you they will expect the signal of peril that shall call them to the rescue.

> "Though no longer the hurricane rave o'er the deep;
> The skies though no longer black tempests deform,—
> In fancied security shall we then sleep?
> No! look to the pilot that weathered the storm."

Your call, should there unhappily be occasion, will be responded to by millions through the length and breadth of the land; and the Anti-Corn-Law agitation present itself revived in all its formidable power, to crush the faintest hopes of monopoly. But that time can be but short. An unlimited time follows, during which your name will be gratefully looked to, as it introduces the list of those who, in winning commercial freedom for their country, became the benefactors of all succeeding generations.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

Published in the "Weekly Dispatch" under the Signature of "PUBLICOLA."

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

The capital-punishment question is essentially one of practical philosophy. What do we punish for? and why can we not accomplish the purposes of punishment without having recourse to the barbarous custom of public strangulation? If these inquiries can be satisfactorily answered, we may consider the subject settled, without further trouble about abstract rights or the exposition of Bible texts.

Nobody, I presume, would retain the gallows except on the plea of necessity. There is no enjoyment in the case. It is not pleasant to see the helpless, pinioned wretch, in his nightcap, with the ordinary on one side humming the Funeral Service in his ear, and the hangman on the other, with busy fingers about his neck, adjusting the noose. Few persons want such a scene repeated simply for gratification. It is allowed that cause must be shown for its recurrence. Most humane people turn rather sick at the exhibition.

Children are not taken to witness it to learn a great moral lesson. There is no Act of Parliament to surround the gallows with benches for the charity-schools. To be sure, a hanging makes a morning holiday for the "lower orders." They can see it without paying. The parsons do not exact pence, as at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. It is "come and welcome," and so they do. How the crowds stretch out,—men, women, and children! Can any body tell the good they get by it? Is there any authentic testimony in existence, in the archives of the criminal jurisprudence of any State whatever, of guilt prevented by wit-

nessing executions? There is plenty of testimony to the contrary. Almost all the unhappy wretches hanged in London of late years have previously been known frequenters of hangings. The youngest knave soon learns not to be startled at the sight of the gibbet. Every execution shows its practical results next morning at the police-offices.

It is the same every where. Mr. Dickens tells us, in his *Pictures from Italy,* that he witnessed an execution at Rome. His pockets were tried repeatedly in the crowd, while the blood was being washed from the scaffold. It is absurd to talk of a moral impression upon a mob assembled to see a hanging. You say, "Justice," and they cry, "Gammon!" They look to see if Jack dies game. He bows, and they cheer; he trembles, and they hoot. The whole thing is as bad as a direct contrivance for barbarising and brutalising all who attend. If we cannot do without this, all that I say is, that we cannot do without a very bad thing. The evil is demonstrative, the good is problematical. It clearly ought to be got rid of, if it be possible to do so, without exposing folks to greater danger of having their throats cut, their brains knocked out, or their puddings sweetened with poison.

June 7, 1846.

That great question is not to be settled by particular instances. It requires a calm and full investigation of the motives by which human nature is acted upon, and of the way in which legislation can best reach those motives. We must forego vindictive feelings and the notion of inflicting retributory pain. They have nothing to do with the prevention of future crime, which is alone the proper object of legislation. The yell of the crowd when the criminal appears on the scaffold is no symptom of the hatred of crime in those who raise it; it rather argues a brutalised disposition akin to crime. For legislation the inquiry is, how to form national and individual character so that crime be least likely to arise. The gibbet has no testimonials to its fitness for this purpose. The soundest reasonings from the philosophy of the human mind tally with the facts of experience. We have dismissed death

punishment by wholesale from the statute-book; and the crimes for which we retain it are not more repressed by the retention than those for which we have discarded it are increased by the repeal. The experience of nations and ages is against the assumption that the infliction of death for crime is the surest prevention of crime. Such experience is not to be nullified by the last specimen of hanging with which the public have been favoured, however dark the guilt of the criminal.

January 28, 1855.

DEATH OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

Mr. Editor,—York has lost its Archbishop, England its Primate, the Queen her Almoner, and the Church one of its two lesser heads,—her Majesty being the one greater head to which alone they are subordinate. The shock must be deeply felt by the country in this calamitous season. Christianity is expected to survive, though, of course, in a precarious condition. The Minster is standing — at present.

For the long period of forty years have the archiepiscopal honours and emoluments of York been enjoyed by the late Right Hon. and Most Rev. Edward Venables Vernon, *alias* Harcourt. He had been previously Bishop of Carlisle for sixteen years. From an early age he had possessed fellowships, livings, canonries, and prebends. During seventy of the ninety-one years of his existence he must have been familiar with the taste of divine things and of public money. A million of pounds sterling would be a moderate estimate for the totality of his receipts. His patronage consisted of three archdeaconries, two chancellorships, one precentorship, twenty-three non-resident canonries, and fifty-three benefices.

Of his family he took good care; "a little more," says the *Times*, "than in modern times is sanctioned by the practice of men in high places." How the amount stands just now I cannot readily ascertain, but some years ago five of his sons

held church preferment to the tune of 11,300*l.* per annum. Should the race share in its patriarch's longevity, the country may compound for another million. What services have been rendered for all this pay and patronage it would be difficult to say. History is mute. The annals of philanthropy bear no record. All that remains is a newspaper certificate of his reputation for "a good, easy man." The character is amiable, but in this case somewhat costly. Annual scores of thousands make folks easy. The Archbishop's eldest son, M.P. for Oxfordshire, is not so easy; he belongs to the Bread-Tax party, and voted with them to the last. The father had the negative merit of standing neuter. Only one instance of energy has been brought to recollection, and that belongs to the last year. A wooden bridge in his park broke down, the Archbishop fell into a ditch, and, according to his own account, "frightened the frogs." Doubtless, in their panic, they croaked as loudly as the money-mongers. With the exception of this descent of the Archbishop, he always "kept the even tenor of his way."

At the Ancient Concerts, of which he was a director, the late Most Reverend Archbishop and Primate has often been seen to beat time in the wrong place. In politics the clergy are accustomed to mark the time pretty correctly. Music can well spare such amateurs, and as little afford to lose the great composer whose death has recently been announced. The memory of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy will outlive, in religion, that of a regiment of bishops. His inspired strains will be the real consecration of cathedrals. They will reach the soul through the senses, and raise it above the world. No Visitation Homily can emulate their persuasiveness. They claim affinity with the words of everlasting truth, and are all of unfading beauty. Such men create something, and leave it for the world to enjoy: they are Nature's priests, and the apostles of humanity. Shade of departed genius! forgive the mention of thy name in the same column with those of the mediocre and mitred minions of political Christianity.

Nov. 14, 1847.

SIR R. H. INGLIS AND OXFORD.

Among the minor and comparatively private interests of this critical time, and yet by no means without its significance, is the separation of two names so long associated and bound together in such unquestionable affinity as those of Sir Robert Harry Inglis, Bart., and the University of Oxford. They were so fitted to each other, that no one dreamed of their being ever parted. During the twenty-five years of their union they have gone on as lovingly as the happiest of happy marriages. "Sure such a pair was never seen, so justly formed to meet by nature!" The university is Sir Robert multiplied, as Sir Robert is the university individualised. Does the university stick to old forms and ceremonies? so does Sir Robert. Is the university proudly classical, but by no means practically scientific? just so Sir Robert. Does the university eschew and labour to exclude innovations and innovators? so did Sir Robert. Is the university a pillar of support to old Mother Church? Sir Robert was her parliamentary walking-stick. Does the university highly honour elevated station and hereditary rank? so does Sir Robert. Loves the university a reasonable dose of fine old port? it would not call in vain on Sir Robert to respond in a bumper to "Esto perpetua!" Were there any deficiencies of peculiar fitness for representing the university in Gladstone, the cold-blooded and calculating, they were amply made up for by the senior colleague, who, in fact, stood before the House and the country as the representative of Oxford University. And now he will represent it no more. His resignation leaves a blank in the House. At prayers—so gracelessly neglected by the great majority—the chaplain will miss his unfailing presence, and his whispered response to the Saviour to have mercy on him.

The Speaker will miss the reverential courtesy of his bow, duly and truly performed at the corner of the table. Lovers of nature—if such can exist in the atmosphere of the House of Commons—will miss the perennial blossom in his button-hole, fair accompaniment of one who seemed himself to be an evergreen. And in debate a voice will be missed which was always heard respectfully, and which, if

it often went wrong, yet went wrong by a rule which every body knew and could calculate beforehand. A whole class quits the House in the departure of Sir R. Inglis. It was once numerous, it is now finally and totally defunct. The old gentlemanly Church-and-King Toryism is no more. He was *ultimus Romanorum*, the last rose of summer. We "shall not look upon his like again," and cannot let him go without a parting word. Long may he enjoy an honourable retirement amid all that can minister to his heart's content!

We lose in him the last surviving specimen of the fine old Tory gentleman. The mongrels that people the present benches of opposition are not Tories: nobody can tell what they are as to principles. D'Israeli has demoralised them all. Peel worked at a semi-liberalisation of them, that wore out their ancient spirit, but breathed no new one into them. D'Israeli made them the opponents of Peel, without guiding them back to their pristine Toryism, or onwards to Liberalism. They are the tools of his plastic power. Neither influence touched the sturdy Sir Robert. He stuck to "as it was in the beginning." He scorned to mingle in the pack that bayed in chorus at D'Israeli's heels. He was accustomed to sit by himself in snug corners below the Whig gangway, evidently not one of their following, and yet directly confronting the mixty-maxty occupants of the old Tory benches. You always knew where to have him, both in locality and in speech. He held devoutly to the last a firm faith in the right of Royalty and the sacredness of Privilege. As to opening the doors of the house of the Constitution to any class whatever, he held that we should be all the warmer, more select and comfortable, by keeping them firmly closed. Sir Robert Peel let in the Catholics; Oxford turned out Sir Robert Peel, and let in Sir Robert Inglis. Exclusion was graven on his brain and heart. In his view, it was the destiny of the excluded, and they ought piously to resign themselves to it; while privilege was the destiny of the included, and they ought religiously to maintain it.

So blandly and calmly, in so gracious and so gentlemanly a manner, would he enunciate doctrines of this kind, that a stranger, seeing but not hearing, would believe him to be uttering some philanthropic axiom, which none but a

madman could contest. Yet was it the concentrated essence and venom of that now outworn system which tended to enslave and brutalise mankind. It was honest, however, and invariably consistent. The height of his ambition was reached in representing the University of Oxford. He would not have exchanged it for a revolutionary throne. He was pure from the trickeries of party. His sentiments and opinions were not for the occasion merely, but for all times and seasons. Every man knew always what was coming. There was something refreshing in the sight of one such man; a fine contrast with the vulgar factionists who will cheer any assertion that tells on their party, and help to fire off any missile that they think will burst open the doors of Downing Street.

In all ecclesiastical questions Sir R. H. Inglis was as a faithful sentinel and champion, specially set for the defence of the Church. To this object he was true as steel. Not a shilling of money, not an inch of ground, would he consent to part with that the Church had touched, and by touching made *taboo*. He held the right of successive vicars to the parish tithes to be as sacred and divine as he also held that of kings to their thrones, and of nobles to their hereditary estates. What a dutiful child of the Church was the worthy old gentleman! He would speak reverently of a popish bishop, for the Church acknowledges the validity of papal orders, but recoil with horror from that same popish bishop having an English diocese, for there the consecrated robber encroached upon the enclosed ground of the Established Church. All things connected with the Church were to him the best. He would read no version of Scripture but the authorised one, though his Greek scholarship must have made him well aware of its defects. He construed its every sentence by the Church's lexicon and through the Church's spectacles. Church creeds were to him the only creeds, and Church schools the best of all possible schools. Indeed, he deemed science bad until baptised by the Church. "Unsanctified knowledge" was, he contended, the nurse of crime. The light of the stars was light that led astray, and the anthem of the ocean was neither set by Tallis nor sung by the college choir. Yet had his "bland intolerance," as Shiel called it, this curious feature,—that it sympathised with Churches, not as orthodox,

but as established. He voted for the exclusiveness of the Church of Scotland, in the case of the lay professors in its universities, though the test which it imposed actually barred out (unless with an equivocation) scientific men of the Episcopal Church. That it was exclusion by an established Church satisfied his conscience. These days of laxity, expedience, reform, and toleration will scarcely yield another such man to stand for Oxford and the Church in Parliament.

Although suspicious of education, Sir Robert was an admirer and friend of learning; that is, of all such learning as bears the conventional stamp. The university was to him a sort of Goldsmith's Company in literature, its mark the test of genuineness. He represented in the House, not only the University of Oxford, but the British Museum; there, too, he withstood innovation. His influence as a trustee and a legislator was opposed to changes which year after year have been proposed for the sake of popularising the institution. Making the duplicate books a lending-library, opening the reading-rooms on evenings, or any proposition of a like nature, was sure to encounter his opposition. His sympathies were only with what is analogous to aristocracy in learning and learned men. There he was liberal. Scientific discovery he appreciated far more justly than do any of the parliamentary parties. In various societies for its promotion it may be hoped that he will long continue to render services akin to the most valuable of those which he was ever ready to render in Parliament.

In gentlemanly feeling, trained and regulated by the usages of the old school, the departing baronet stood pre-eminent. No emotion betrayed him into violence of manner. Smiles played around his bitterest sarcasm. And when a certain notorious member, on whose vulgarity the *modern gentlemen* of the aristocratic party fawned, had insulted the House by language to which his drunken lips could scarcely give intelligible utterance, his own moral dignity, if not that of the assembly, was readily and well sustained by Sir R. H. Inglis, who quietly declared that for the aristocracy of birth he had profound respect, and also for that of character, talent, and acquirement, but for that of mere wealth he had no regard whatever. And by

whom of those that he described, however differing from him in opinion, will not that respect be sincerely and permanently reciprocated?

Jan. 22, 1854.

EDUCATION AND THE FRANCHISE.

WHAT is the great want throughout the country? Not of schools; there is plenty of school-room for twice as many children as now attend them, and abundant surplus provision in institutes, &c., for adults. The want is that of a motive-power to act upon the masses. They are not sufficiently conscious of good for themselves or their offspring to have recourse even to gratuitous instruction. All attempts hitherto at making them so conscious have failed. It is in the nature of things that they should fail. Ignorance cannot be expected to appreciate the blessings of knowledge. Its panegyrists speak an unknown language to them. Even the worldly advantages which follow seem too remote and contingent to act upon their minds. This want of a motive-power is felt and lamented throughout our whole system.

It reconciles some to the notion of such an infliction of penalties as that adopted in Prussia; but against that the national character recoils. The habits and feelings of the people, not only in the poorer, but in all classes, render it impracticable. Others have sought to supply the want by arbitrary or artificial rewards. Associations of employers have been framed, or at least contemplated, for withholding work from all juvenile applicants, unless previously educated. Still the public mind is dissatisfied with any or all of these schemes. It flounders about in search of an adequate motive in the masses to impel them to the adoption of education for their young ones and for themselves. Yet in these same masses there has long existed an intense desire for political rights. Into the absence of these rights they resolve all the privations and sufferings which they have to endure, and all the privations and sufferings which they

feel or fancy. They covet it with an eagerness which must be actually witnessed to be duly appreciated.

Why not, then, lay hold of this power in their minds, and guide it towards the actual extension of education by means of the promised extension of the franchise? Here is the power desiderated. It is ready for immediate use. The engine is on the line, the steam is up; you have only to hook on the train, and off it goes. There would be no need to wait for education bills; no occasion to trust to municipalities, or to sects and churches. Let the working classes see their way to the suffrage by means of education, and they would soon take to the use of those means without any charitable help. They would find or make their own resources adequate; or, if not, the country would not fail of affording the facilities which the object requires. By removing the education of the working classes from the sphere of religion and charity to that of politics, it would be brought into the practical world. It is as much for the sake of educational as of political progress that I have ventured these remarks on their connection,—a connection which is capable of greatly facilitating both the one and the other.

Jan. 29, 1854.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE AND THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

Petition, then, and associate, and work for the blessing of a free Sabbath. It is your right as a day of rest. The Christianity which modern sects burlesque recognises it not as a day of gloom, but of cheerfulness; not as a fast, but as a festival. On that day the founders of Christianity were abroad in the fields, and apostles were journeying when they found it convenient. No really Christian doctrine or precept, no principle inculcated in the New Testament, would be violated, were not only the Crystal Palace, and your lecture and conference halls, but also the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Zoological Gardens, and similar institutions, open to the public on the Sunday.

Churches and sects have made a crime of going to them on that day, not the New Testament. Even if it had, why should we bind down those whose consciences do not acknowledge such authority? Have they not equal rights with ourselves? Must they act according to our consciences? Who made us their lords and masters? But I need not argue this point. That glory which the heavens display shines in the loveliness of nature and the grandeur of art. Those means which Providence has placed within our reach for the culture of mind and heart ought to be as free for common use as they can rightfully be made. If our Sunday path leads towards the Crystal Palace, neither church nor chapel ought to be allowed to block the way. It is for the working people to say whether they will take the trouble to clear away the obstruction. The country is at war with the cause of civilisation; that cause has other foes besides the Czar, with whom it is equally our business to grapple, and from whom, if we win our rights, we shall achieve a more valuable triumph than that of many sanguinary battles. Victories in the field may secure political freedom; our Sunday victory would obtain the means for millions of intelligent enjoyment, advancement, and progress.

May 7, 1854.

DR. JACOB AND CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

The reforms enumerated by Dr. Jacob, and which the governors should apply themselves to accomplishing, extend to almost every part of the institution: from the sanitary arrangements of the building to the intellectual training; and from that to the religious and moral guidance of the boys. His views are clear, enlightened, and such as are generally held by those who have studied the subject of education, unbiassed by the sordid notions of mere traders in schooling, or the sectarian purposes of those whose aim is not to instruct, but simply to proselyte. Still, Dr. Jacob is a clergyman. He praises in the school, "the sound theory of its religious character, as seen in its per-

manent connection with the Protestant Church of England." Yes; every thing by which public money can be obtained is permanently connected with the Protestant Church of England. There is the permanent connection of the fat carcass and the carrion-crows.

Christ-Church School was endowed before the Episcopal Church was yet matured. Articles and prayers have been changed since that foundation. The Act of Uniformity was not passed till long afterwards. Popery yet lingered in the Church, and Puritanism had not broken off into Dissent.

Christ Church belongs to the people. The monopoly of its masterships by clergymen and *alumni* of Oxford and Cambridge is an abuse. So is the exclusive character of these religious forms which are, as appears, all the security of piety for the children. True, there is little influence in these forms; but those who protest against sectarianism have no desire for the promotion of hypocrisy. If a popular institution bear a religious character, its religion should be of the simplest and broadest description. It should be as comprehensive as is possible; and where comprehension is impracticable, toleration should be its supplement. There would be little difficulty in this, were it not for the interference of priests and parsons. God's children would love and serve their Father, if they were let alone. And surely Dr. Jacob might have looked a little beyond the boundaries and tendencies of his own profession, in which case he would not have found a theme for laudation in the connection of a public institution with the Church of one-third of the population. He would rather have assigned this fact to the catalogue of abuses for which reformation is imperatively required.

However, we are thankful to him for what he has done; we congratulate him on his escape; and wish him God-speed, if he will but persevere. But the voice of the public must be raised if this or any other similar institution is to be rescued from monopoly and abuse, and to be directed towards its legitimate purposes. All endowed schools, colleges, and universities that date back to a time anterior to the full development of the sectarian character of the Church of England, are the public property. When the people of one faith become the people of many faiths, they forfeit no educa-

tional rights thereby. A school endowed for them all when they had one faith only, remained a school for them all when they adopted many faiths. The founders had no right to prescribe the faith of future generations, even though what they prescribed was in their own day universal. On this principle has legislation proceeded in dealing with Catholic foundations. That it should stop at merely handing over such establishments from the Papal to the Episcopal Protestant Church is a monstrous incongruity. In fact, the dead, whatever their wealth or their wills, have no right whatever to prescribe authoritatively either the faith or the instruction of subsequent generations. Both the one and the other should be modified according to the spirit of the age. The notions of religion and education which prevailed three centuries ago are, to a large extent, obsolete now. Different modes of life and occupation demand a different training. Let Christ Church, if it will, still have its own Grecians; but, if it is to realise the full measure of public utility of which it is capable, it must also have its hundreds who can spell correctly and write legible hands—which is more than very many of its present students of Virgil and Cæsar can do;—and who, in addition to this, have some skill in the sciences, some knowledge of history, and some fitness for becoming active, successful, honourable, and useful citizens.

November 26, 1854.

THE CHURCHES MILITANT.

The devoted heroism of the battle-field, with all its sanguinary stains, has more religion in it than the clamours of the militant Churches; and there is yet the finest specimen of all in the hospitals of Scutari. The best embodiment of Christianity which these passing scenes present is in Miss Nightingale and her band of nurses. They come not to trouble the dying with creeds and catechisms; their mission is one of unmingled mercy. No vow binds them to duty; but a spontaneous obedience to the law of love. They do not, like certain chaplains, pick out colonels and majors to attend

upon; their services are for the humblest of those who fought and bled in the common ranks. Their ministrations breathe a peace which no priestly benediction can bestow. They soothe the mind while they mitigate the pains of the mangled body. With no unchristian incantations they draw down the spirit of health to abide in the receptacle of the suffering. The wistful eye, as it follows their movements, is moist with tears of gratitude. No distinction of creed or country draws a boundary-line to their universal charity. From no offensiveness of anguish do they recoil. The thoughtful preparation, the gentle care and tending, the unfailing assiduity, are for all; and onwards they move, like the Angel of Pity, who is said to track the footsteps of sorrow whithersoever they lead. Humanity canonises them, and a halo beams around their heads. Across interposing seas and mountains our voices reëcho the blessings which are breathed on them from the hearts of those victims of war to whom they minister.

December 3, 1854.

MR. D'ISRAELI.

"I AM a gentleman of the press: it is my only scutcheon." So once said Benjamin D'Israeli in the House of Commons. The avowal was handsome, seeing that some question affecting reporters or newspaper writers was then before the House. And he need not be ashamed to quarter it with whatever arms, and under the crest of whatever coronet, his political course may eventually lead to. The wit and eloquence and power of his productions would have achieved no low place for him in the annals of English literature, had his ambition been confined to that sphere. With the exception of the preposterous boy's work of the *Revolutionary Epic,* since so well cleared out of the market, there has not been much of political inconsistency in his writings. The "What is he?" of his youth must, indeed, have a different answer to what the question would now elicit; but that's not much. The politics of his novels are a guidance to the politics of the man. He laughs at the tricks of his own

party, and then he plays those very tricks. He pillories Taper and Tadpole, and then closets with them as to creating a cry. He draws the scamp Vivian Grey playing politics as a game of personal advantage, and then he makes the like moves, hooking on first to Lord George Bentinck and then to Lord Derby. He laughs over his own creations. He can pull the strings of tragic or sentimental puppets with a broad grin on his face. He seems to speak with a mask on, and half to drop it when he writes. The politics of his literature may be, at the bottom, as devoid of principle as his opponents believe those of the parliamentary partisan to be; but they are infinitely amusing, and well worth studying.

December 26, 1854.

It is said of Edmund Kean that, before his appearance at Old Drury as the "bright particular star" of the metropolis and the Roscius of England, he had been the universal workman of a country theatre: had begun the night by enacting Hamlet or Richard; had danced a hornpipe between the play and the farce; had set the house in a roar by the grimaces of Abel Drugger, or the fun of some face-making farce; and had finished the evening in the particoloured jacket of Harlequin, with a somersault through the back scene; and all for his own benefit. Well, sir, Edmund Kean was a great man; but I question whether he was so clever and versatile as Disraeli, who has performed as great a variety of extraordinary feats of a different sort, and with this remarkable difference—that they are not *for his own benefit,* if that benefit is to be taken in the highest sense, and referred to the judgment of public opinion, or the deliberate and conscientious voice of those whose convictions anticipate the verdict of posterity, and are the prophecy of history.

March 6, 1858.

CHURCH IN THE ARMY.

What an egregious fallacy it is, that a man who cannot write or even read—whose daily occupation has been the manual and platoon exercise, varied by cleaning his musket and pipeclaying his gaiters—whose home has been the tent or the trenches, and the scene of his holidays the battle-field—should have a religion so defined and distinctive, that he needs an ordained theologian of a particular school to commune with his mind when sick or wounded. The real religion of such a one can only be the natural instinctive feelings of the human heart. The common-sense of any kindly pious friend must be the best help for his distress when he is distressed. What knows he of the jargon—jargon to the learned as well as to the ignorant—of the Athanasian Creed? How does the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary affect his pains, fears, or hopes? Why should the Presbyterian be solicitous to initiate him into the mysteries of effectual calling or the divine decrees? If, during his seclusion from active service, his physical state will allow him to master the art of reading—if the key of knowledge be thus put into his hands and the desire excited to avail himself diligently of his present and future opportunities—why, then the day may dawn hereafter when the man will have a more distinct conception of religion, and when he ought to feel himself perfectly free to make his own choice amongst the thousand and one faiths of Christendom which all claim to be orthodoxy. What can any religionist desire more, unless he prefers words to ideas, outward conformity to inward apprehension, and the security of a nominal proselyte to the reality of religion in the soul? I say, trust to Miss Nightingale and the nurses. They have shown sound sense, Christian feeling, and that devotedness to a good work which is "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father," if there be truth in the New Testament. Their few words to the sufferers as they fulfil their mission of mercy, if they were allowed to utter them—which they are not—would be worth more than all the confessions, homilies, and ceremonies which priests are muttering, and for which the public are paying. Should pure and devout emotions, raising the thoughts and refining

the character, be generated in the minds of patients at Scutari, to colour and bless their after lives, that result may most reasonably be anticipated, not from the swarms of priests, clergy, ministers, and chaplains, but from the grateful recollections which will long surround the names of Miss Nightingale and her band of nurses.

January 21, 1855.

THE DAY OF HUMILIATION.

In every pie the meddling Church must have a finger, even though it be a dirt pie, kneaded with blood. No act of life, nor death itself, is free from its intrusion. It appropriates the child by baptism, mixes its pretensions with matrimony, terrifies the death-bed, and stands sentry over the rotting corpses in their graves, to see that dissenting dust comes not into too close a conjunction with orthodox corruption. Does our population run away from it, and found a colony?—the clergy are after them, and at their heels a bishop, and at his heels the dogs of theological strife and contention.

Do we launch a ship, or build a prison, or organise a regiment, or send out an ambassador, why then the ship, prison, regiment, and embassy must all have their chaplains; they stick to the body politic like the plagues of Egypt "in all its borders." Of course the Church farms the war. Our brave fellows abroad wanted tents, they wanted pick-axes, they wanted clothing, they wanted fresh meat, they wanted vegetables, they wanted ground coffee and something to boil it in, they wanted medicines,—and, in fact, they wanted every thing in the world save and except chaplains, with which they were supplied in abundance. They came where they were not wanted, catechising the dying warrior about his saving faith, and turning the sick and wounded, with the medical attendants who had them in charge, out of the best cabin, in order by its appropriation to support the spiritual dignity of the Church. And the Church must show its dignity also at head-quarters. Lord

Palmerston himself, with all his energy, dares not deal with it as he did with the Edinburgh Presbytery in the case of the cholera. He is afraid of rebuking the praying-and-not-doing system in the stronger Church as he did in the weaker. There is as much reason. If the bishops were inclined to turn moral scavengers, as Lord Palmerston admonished the Scotch parsons to see to the physical scavenging of Auld Reekie, there would be plenty of work for them to do in purifying the army from the influences which have victimised it; and then in washing their own ecclesiastical hands clean before raising them towards heaven to invoke a blessing upon our champions in this great conflict. But Lord Palmerston is now in the slavery of party-leadership, and no party leader can afford to smile in the presence of the Church—a Church not more oracular than vindictive, and not less powerful than either, and whose motto is, "When I ope my mouth let no dog bark."

The appointment of a fast-day is a penalty levied upon the working classes, for the glory of the Church and the gratification of the superstitious. On Wednesday next the labouring millions of Great Britain will be mulcted of a day's wages, which in many cases will be to mulct them and their children of a day's food. The tax, for such it is, will not be levied upon the *employés* of Government. They are privileged. They make others pay, but pay nothing themselves; and will most likely have as little to do with the praying as with the paying. To them the occurrence is the boon of a day of idleness. So with the Church. No bishop, dean, rector, or curate will have a day's pay deducted from his income nor a dish from his table, while the workman's one loaf is abstracted from the platter. But they will make collections in all the churches for the Patriotic Fund. Very good! I trust they will be large ones, and such as become the generous care of a great nation over its disabled defenders. Not a syllable would I write to check that liberality, whether it be manifested in a church, in a theatre, or in a workshop. And allow me to add, that the workshops have not been behind the churches in this matter. Into the treasury of charity the "mites" have flowed freely, and if the paper-capped donors had had mitres full of gold, they would have been emptied as freely. Still the disparity returns upon the view. The rich retain

their pay, and exhort to give; the poor are exhorted to give, and lose their pay. Parsons talk of the wounded; why, they are wounding the working men by this privation of his wages. They cripple him for the day. They hear the cries of the wounded from the Crimea, and they do not hear the cries of the children nearer home. There is no piety in such compulsory fasting. If they believe the Book from which they preach, it is an abomination to the Lord.

Whatever may become of forms and ceremonies, the first care should have been to avert their tendency to damage poverty and industry. With what face can men pretend to apply to God for help to soldiers in the Crimea, who inflict injury by the very action upon labourers in Great Britain? As their prayers ascend to heaven, they kick down the bread-baskets of the toilers upon earth. Did he rightly understand the whole proceeding—which the staff of chaplains around him will take good care he shall not do—the generous spirit of the British soldier would spurn back the alms and prayers thus proffered at the expense of the drudging and plundered brethren whom he left behind him.

The approaching fast will be observed like other fasts before it. That large majority of the population which is not church-going will take its usual course. Those who can afford a dinner will not fast. If the day be fine, there will be pic-nics abroad, feastings at home, and all the excursioning that is practicable. But, as folks will not go to church, all possible care will be taken to prevent their going any where else, unless, perhaps, just to call in at the gin-shop. That is the favourite alternative with the fanatics, —"Us or the gin-shop." Wednesday is to come under Sunday regulations. Locomotion will generally be reduced to the minimum of Sunday trains. Houses of refreshment must, through the greater part of the day, lock their doors. There will be a ban upon all places of amusement. Places of instruction and of refined enjoyment are yet more obnoxious to our overbearing saints. No British Museum, no National Gallery, no Crystal Palace even. It will be all a blank. What help our troops in the Crimea will receive, or how the attainment of an honourable peace is to be promoted, by inflicting upon thousands a day of stupid endurance or of sly debauchery, it is difficult to imagine. Whatever becomes of the fasting and prayer, and of the

good things which some promise they shall do for us, there is certainly a sense in which the day is for the nation a day of profound humiliation. We are humbled for our military conceit. We have fed on the fame of Waterloo and the Peninsula, till it has acted upon us like an intoxicating drug. We swaggered by the side of our French allies, and have sunk into pensioners upon their bounty and help. All ranks are tainted with incompetence. Our generals take up positions which they are unable to maintain. Regiments grow ragged while their clothing rots, and starve while their food moulders. By night we are surprised, and by day we blunder into sanguinary heroism. We have commanders not fit for corporals, and only escape the lowest pit of disgrace by the indomitable physical courage of our men. Equally is it a day of humiliation for our business pretensions. How we talked of organisation, arrangements, efficiency,—not in our iron-foundries and cotton-factories, where they are to be found, but in those governmental departments which we intrust exclusively to aristocracy, and to those on whom aristocracy, for various reasons, bestows its patronage. And so department after department has miserably broken down. It seems as if all the inefficiency of the country had been swept together into the establishments of the government, while ability was driven away to mind its own private business. The day is one of humiliation as to our institutions. What figure has been cut of late by "the admiration and envy of surrounding nations"! Had talking been as good as fighting, the war would, indeed, have been carried on vigorously; but it is vain to substitute the clack of tongues for the click of triggers. Even with the help of Roebuck's committee, we cannot yet find who's who in the long muster-roll of those who ought to be called to account for failures the most disastrous, blunders the most egregious, and offences the most culpable. No act of justice yet awards retribution for the past, or promises security for the future. We drift on for weeks without a government, and for years without a policy. And as to the ecclesiastical portion of our institutions, are we not degraded in that when—instead of teaching the people, and raising the standard of their knowledge, thoughts, and morals—we find it resorting to this antiquated contrivance of placating a Deity, supposed

to be angry, by going to church and dining upon fish? Need I add that it is a day of humiliation for the want of spirit, energy, and coöperative movement in the people for the redress of all these wrongs and absurdities? How long shall we endure them? — how long allow the means of defence and good government to be trafficked and patronised away?—how long forbear to insist upon thorough reform in army, Church, and representation?—how long be content to be governed by classes and cliques, and forego the rights which belong to the manhood of nations? Every day is a day of humiliation till these nuisances be rectified.

We reply to the proclamation by telling its authors that we are already ashamed of ourselves, and purpose not to pray, but to work, until we wipe away the disgrace and corruptions of the past, and reclaim for our country its foremost place among the nations.

March 18, 1855.

A THANKSGIVING DAY.

The Thanksgiving Day will, I trust, be a proper, hearty, and joyous Thanksgiving Day, not a Puritanical one; not a transmutation of some Wednesday or Friday into an Agnew Sunday. There should be no shutting-up of the beer-shops, though I am far from recommending the pattern of the Restoration festivities, of which it was said, "Now universal England getteth drunk." The intoxication of joy will well suffice for this red-letter day, and let the temperance bands parade the streets and lead on long processions, brought up by the treble shouts of the little Bands of Hope by wagonsful. The religious services, too, should have something unusually grand and gorgeous about them. Surely for one day Lord Shaftesbury and his anti-Puseyite party may waive their objection to a little extra ceremony, and the garlands of roses be heaped upon altars adorned for the festivity. Even the barn-like architecture of our older Nonconformist chapels may bear a few boughs of laurel upon its sober

walls. If our cathedrals will not tolerate incense, yet they may give us music, and let their aisles resound with some thundering oratorio choruses. I would have the day every where marked out for gladness. Of course people will have to call themselves "miserable sinners" in the church, but let them be jolly good fellows every where else. Every park should have its band of music. Every theatre should at night be thrown open free to the public. All our museums and exhibitions should in a similar way contribute to the public thankfulness. The lions of the Zoological Gardens should salute the public ear with an extra roar, and the flowers of the Botanical bloom with their brightest colour. In the Crystal Palace it should be a splendid *fête*-day. Could not the fountains for once flow with champagne? it would make sparkling and splendid rainbows in the sunshine; and the heroes of Australia and Abyssinia might be decked out in their brightest habiliments of triumph. In the name of Heaven, which, according to the old despatch form, "has blessed her Majesty's arms," let us make a day of it, and crown the night with the radiance of fireworks.

And then let us remember "in the midst of all this joy and uproar" that this is a serious and a solemn work in which we are engaged. We have voluntarily undertaken the championship of the cause of nations against a power which seemed determined, as far as possible, by any means of fraud or force, to put down freedom and independence throughout Europe, and crush out with its iron heel every spark of liberty. The annexation of the Crimea itself within the last century, the appropriation of Finland, the absorption of Poland, the enslavement of Hungary, and the influence exercised over all the German States,—these broadly proclaim the policy of Russia. It is this, as well as the attempts on Turkey, that we have to resist. Already we have made great sacrifices, we have uncomplainingly submitted to heavy burdens, and, what is still harder to bear, we have seen the best blood of the country flow like water; but our work is yet incomplete. We must nerve ourselves for more endurance and for more exertions. Other commercial men must prepare for reverses, and other families must put on mourning. Nor can we expect, should Russia, as is not unlikely, prove obstinate and unbending, that our enterprise is to be a succession of triumphs.

We have had victory: we may have to taste of defeat. The history of war is always written on checkered pages. Ultimate success, I think, cannot be doubted; but it must be pursued with a firm will, steady principles, and unshaken reliance upon our cause. Thus it is that we may claim the glory of being a great nation, engaged in a great work, for the accomplishment of a glorious deliverance. We shall go on encouraged by the kindred spirit of magnanimous allies. On our conjoint efforts there cannot but rest a blessing; and we shall realise at least the half of the first Napoleon's prophecy; and though Europe may not become technically "Republican," we shall at least prevent its becoming "Cossack."

September 16, 1855.

ON AMERICAN INDIFFERENCE TO THE GREAT EUROPEAN STRUGGLE.

The commercial spirit, when not blended with a high sense of honour, heroic recollections, lofty hopes, and a strong regard for national character and duties, is apt to degenerate into a sordid and grossly selfish one. Even the alleged effeminacy of luxury is less fatal to heroic and generous impulses than the absorption of trade and commercial gains. We find this at home: we see it at Manchester, the head-quarters for peace at any price. Manchester and America are in sympathy; only, as America has not gone to war, she has no occasion to cry out for peace. So she looks on, and calculates. If any odds and ends are to be picked up out of the belligerent parties, she is on the alert not to lose them. She will build steamers for the Czar, make good use of her neutral flag, and lend her transports for the garrison of Petropolovski. She has nothing to get by fighting. The Russians at Constantinople would not diminish her trade. She would import as many figs as heretofore. Should the Crimea be conquered, it would be given to her as a slave state or a colony, and she would much rather steal Cuba or annex Mexico. It is intelligible

how such should to some minds be the paramount idea of America. But it is not less deplorable than intelligible. One grieves to see her become a mere huckster among nations. One would have hoped that the growing youth of a nation, like that of an individual, would have been more open and impressible to generous impulses. A youth of calculation does not promise a noble maturity. Sordidness is a disease of the soul, and we can only desiderate for America some curative process.

At least, it might have been expected that sympathy would have existed in the United States for the suffering nationalities of Europe. At least, we might have expected some antagonistic feeling towards the great power which has been the bulwark of all oppression, the crushing of all free and independent nationality. But America seems proud of a supposed monopoly of liberty. She recognises no freedom but her own. She affects to consider the old states as despotisms altogether. She even pats on the back our mad Irish renegades, who are summoning their delegates, rather prematurely, to proclaim that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." Now, this is a very gross mistake. It is a species of practical political dogmatism. The forms of republicanism are by no means essential to the spirit of freedom. There is more practical liberty of thought and expression in England than there is in America. "I should not have been prosecuted," said Richard Carlile to William Cobbett, "in America for my publications." "No," replied Cobbett, "you would have been tarred and feathered." And Richard Carlile would not have been prosecuted in England at the present day. France is under an absolute ruler; but France has that ruler by millions of votes in the ballot-box; and France enjoys, and ever has enjoyed since the Revolution, under all its varying forms of government, a more absolute and civil equality than America itself can boast. Sardinia is making strides in equal, just, and constitutional government, which the enlightened of any country may contemplate with sympathy, with lively interest, and with high admiration. All liberty is not boxed up in America. Still less is the aspiring love of freedom. The patriots of Poland, Italy, and Hungary are all regarding this struggle with intense anxiety. America might reasonably feel some consideration

for their interests and hopes. Their emancipation is not, indeed, directly and distinctly amongst the objects of the war; but every true heart of the allied nations hopes it may prove amongst the incidents of the war. They feel this, they acknowledge the propriety of the reservation, and they show at once the magnanimity of their minds and the intensity of their hopes by their readiness to engage in the struggle as foreign legionaries. And may the time soon come when their own flags, the white eagle of Poland and the tricolors of Italy and Hungary, shall be thrown freely to the wind in the front of the battle against the common oppressor! Dares America refuse to echo that wish with a loud "Amen"? For her own honour we hope not. But we must confess that her blank silence hitherto gives us sad fears and forebodings.

September 23, 1855.

CONVICT PRISONS AND THEIR CLERICALS.

THERE are in England some men eminent for wisdom and philanthropy engaged in this onerous duty. Amongst them the Rev. Mr. Kingsmill of Pentonville, the Rev. Mr. Walpole of the "Stirling Castle" hulk, and I cannot but add the Rev. Mr. Clay of Preston, shine conspicuously. But, generally speaking, gaol chaplains are the sweepings of our Established Church, and, to a certain extent, of the Catholic Church also. They are narrow-minded, ignorant, credulous professional men. Many of them, we may suppose, are content to live upon the better-instructed people who go at large. Such persons are, of all, the most unfit for the mission with which they are intrusted. It is a mistake to suppose, even in common educational matters, that the tuition of the grossly ignorant may be safely intrusted to the comparatively ignorant. In fact, it requires higher degrees of knowledge and wisdom to raise the densely stupid and ignorant than it does to act upon those more favourably circumstanced. And the chaplain who has to deal with the convict has a much more arduous task, and

one which requires keener discrimination, warmer sympathies, and higher powers, than are requisite in him who leads the devotions of an average parish congregation. So that, in fact, as a rule, we take the worst tools for the most difficult work. True, it is a miserable life, and, unless in the rare case of a generous philanthropy, miserable are those for whom the Church affords no more palatable means of subsistence. With all their love for their convict congregations, with all their satisfaction for the souls they rescue from destruction, they would most of them, doubtless, be very glad to exchange for the humblest living in the remotest parish.

A wise, a good, and a great thing has been done by the adoption of the reformatory principle into our criminal jurisprudence. But a blunder is committed by intrusting the working of that principle so largely to the present race of gaol chaplains. They did mischief in the old hanging days, by almost canonising the ruffians whose executions they attended. They made the gibbet a highway to glory. Religion was thus burlesqued. People were practically taught a most immoral doctrine. The very conception of a heavenly state was polluted. But the abuse of the reformatory principle, by means of the ticket-of-leave system, to which they are parties, is of a kind to come more directly home to the public mind. The chaplains may or may not be judges of the convert's chance of salvation; but it is clear they are no judges of his return to the paths of common honesty. Less regard must be paid to their opinion, or the system will utterly break down. We must not heed the number of their communicants. No implicit reliance must be placed upon their testimony to true repentance. They must be checked by the good sense of the lay authorities. And if fair play can thus be had for the reformatory discipline of our convict prisons, we may still hope to make a great advance upon the old plan of simply penal inflictions, and establish the reformation of the criminal as one of the ends which may be not only theoretically desirable, but practically attainable by just punishment.

September 30, 1855.

JUDAISM AND MOSES.

And now, if I may turn from the Christians to the Jews, I would seriously ask them—and I trust the thoughtful amongst them will not be startled at the question—whether the spirit of the age does not call for a revision of the Laws of Moses?

Such a suggestion may be met at the outset by the assertion that Moses was inspired; that the Spirit of God dwelt in him, and dictated his code. But if an assembly of wise and holy rabbins were summoned from all countries of the dispersion, would not the Spirit of God come upon them also, and dictate the revision of that code? Do not the Jews believe in the inspiration of interpreters as well as of the great lawgiver? Where is their authority for their particular mode of getting rid of the blood of bullocks? Is it not derived from the Mishna or the Talmud, or some such authority of secondary inspiration? There are many cumbrous and apparently useless observances in the laws which they hold so strictly binding, and which might well be dispensed with. Enough would yet remain to preserve them a decidedly separate people from the races amongst whom they dwell. Many of their laws had reference to idolatries which have long vanished from the face of the earth. Some refer to extinct crimes, as in the denunciation of capital punishment against sorcery: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Witchcraft has followed idolatry into oblivion. From the Old Testament itself they may derive the principle of correction for certain Draconic portions of their code. Why, the Pentateuch enacts the punishment of death for a hundred and twenty different distinct offences. England, in its most hanging days, was not stained by a code so sanguinary. Were the Jews restored to their country, it is impossible to believe that a people so just, humane, and enlightened would render Jerusalem such a city of gibbets. In fact, it never was so in the palmiest days of Israel. Their laws were never literally executed. The common instincts of our nature anticipated that revision which I am suggesting that their spiritual dignitaries should formally undertake. The Jew would then be released from many little vexations

and privations. He might not care for black pudding, but why should he be denied a ham sandwich? Pork is unwholesome in the East, but it is very nourishing and palatable here in the West. The sanitary prohibition of a hot region is quite out of place in a cold climate. As we advance to the north, we need more solid animal food, and more stimulating beverages. We have less and less occasion, till it altogether vanishes, for the distinction between clean and unclean animals. The rabbins would, I hope, take reasonable views of these matters. A great deal of trouble would be saved to society. The world is indebted largely to the Jews for divine wisdom, and the Jews might be content to be indebted to the world for a little of human rationality.

October 21, 1855.

THE BIBLE IN SCHOOLS.

The use of the Bible in schools and by young women suggests another argument for a careful revision, of a different description, but not less conclusive. Of course the text must not be tampered with; but it does tell certain things which might be more darkly veiled, in a version for modern use, amongst a people with our established notions of propriety and decency. There are words and sentences, descriptions and narratives, in the Bible, which no father would set his young daughter to read aloud, or be particularly pleased—though he calls them the word of God—with her studying in secret. I was once applied to, by an unfeignedly religious mother, to know if there were any edition of the Bible which she could put into the hands of a growing daughter without blushing.

Longmans, some time ago, announced for publication a "Family Bible," with the indecorums expunged. The edition never appeared; the advertisement was withdrawn; and the booksellers probably found that the Church would take mortal offence at their squeamishness. The Holywell-Street booksellers adopted a different course; they collected

all the passages of the description referred to, and published them in a separate volume, for the edification of Christian juveniles, and to the great disgust of Christian adults. They followed the plan said to be adopted with the classics in some of our school-books, where, as Lord Byron observed, the improper passages were eliminated from the text, and put together in an appendix, thus saving the trouble of hunting them out by means of an index. Can it be contended that the very "natural" passages of the Bible, as a bishop calls them, are fit to be read by schoolmasters to little boys, and by schoolmistresses to little girls? Why, even clerical brass is scarcely equal to the achievement; although we have heard clergymen read passages which would make any modest man bite his tongue till it bled. To the pure, no doubt, all things are pure; to the antiquarian all things ancient are precious; to the genealogist it is curious to know that "Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed;" but why should we stir up children's intellects with a dirty stick? There were parts of the Old Testament which the Jews—to whom the word came, and who must, therefore, have best known how to take it—did not allow to be read by those under thirty years of age. The precocity of modern times, and the great dissemination of books, may perhaps reduce this limitation to eighteen or twenty; but to familiarise children's minds with the whole indiscriminately is perfectly monstrous. If they must have the whole book, it is incumbent on the Church to make the whole book fit to be put into their hands. The present practice is a perversion. The Bible was never given as a school-book—nothing can well be further from its original design and purpose, even in those ruder times when it originated; and if our religious educationists will not forego the imposition of the Bible as a universal school-book, they ought, at any rate, to shroud the passages which are unfit for juvenile optics.

The Bible contains our religion; it does not contain our philosophy, but a philosophy unfounded, obsolete, exploded; and care should be taken that, with the means of teaching true religion, we do not allow it also to become the means of teaching this false philosophy. The astronomy and geology of the Bible are at variance with the well-ascertained discoveries of science. No equivocation or flexibility of inter-

pretation can bring them into harmony. Now, I do dispute the religiousness of going up to heaven or down to hell, or of the earth being a plane, or the sky a firmament, or the stars only night-lamps; the clergy may teach all this as religion if they like, but I dispute and deny their right to teach it to school-children or unlettered adults as a true philosophy. It is no such thing, and they know it. An authentic Bible, put forth as the infallible word of God, ought never to be unaccompanied with a protest against the falsehood of its philosophy. Such an accompaniment is due to the sacred majesty of truth; and those who object to it, "love darkness rather than light," and, therefore, cannot be safe guides to spiritual illumination.

What I would suggest, therefore, is, that a Royal Commission should issue to learned, competent, and honest persons, for the revision of the holy scriptures. Learned laymen would be better than the clergy, and not so likely to be misled by professional associations, familiar phrases, and other conventionalities. They might, too, be taken from different bodies, the Dissenter and the Catholic being represented as well as the Church; nor would the translation be the worse for having the sanction of an erudite unbeliever. A better basis could not be found than the authorised version itself; emendations, corrections, and illustrations being supplied with an unsparing hand wherever needed. One would hope that such a version would meet with general acceptance and adoption. Sundry controversies would thereby be laid to rest, a court of appeal would be established for contending sects, clergymen would be under less temptation to tamper with their consciences, and schools would be provided with an unexceptionable and profoundly instructive volume.

November 25, 1855.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

Something is absolutely necessary to preserve the very idea of a holiday in the minds of the people of this country. It is thoroughly swamped by superstition on the one hand and sensuality on the other. Our two interpretations of a holiday are, going to church, and getting drunk. The temple and the taproom divide the prize; and there is action and reaction in this matter. Our Sabbatarians will tolerate no middle course. They seem to hate the Crystal Palace more than they abominate the gin-shops. In all this they are very illogical. There is no foundation for their gloomy fancies. The Christian sabbath of the primitive ages was notoriously a festival; so were the holidays of the Jews. They were consecrated with dance and feasting. It was the dark-blooded Puritanism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that made war upon maypoles, and clothed Sunday in sable; and hence the stimulus to that contradictory spirit which knows no celebration but a Bacchanalian orgie. But one cannot reason either party out of their fanaticism, spiritual or sensuous, in a week or ten days. I leave them all to their devices, and only hope that the opportunity will not be lost for inserting a day of rational amusement between either the asceticisms or the indulgences of Sunday and Tuesday in next week. I would drive such a day in, like a wedge, between the two, and hope it may be the commencement of an opening for better things. It would be something to get a day of the British Museum or National Gallery for the people in between the piety and the plum-puddings. Who can doubt that it would be a day of rational and unexceptionable amusement? We have securities for its good behaviour. Sunday and Christmas-day keep guard over it. It walks along in their company as if between two policemen, and surely will never be likely either to get tipsy or to behave indecorously!

No doubt many objections will be made on the score of probable abuse. Visions of pewter pots and black eyes will arise upon the mind; and outcries of drunken debauchery and Irish rows will resound in the ear. Fears will be felt lest Catholics should keep Christmas-day by

more Bible-burning. It is inconceivable to some intellects that good should be offered to the people, and the people not abuse it. But our experience of the opening of the British Museum and National Gallery, of Kew Gardens and Hampton Court on Sundays, of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and of the Crystal Palace, with its cheap day, since, ought assuredly to correct this apprehension. How few instances of abuse have occurred! And those few are not ascribable to the working classes, for whom I am asking a holiday. It was not a working man that smashed the Portland vase at the British Museum, or that knocked over a statuette, and was going to walk through a mirror, at the Crystal Palace. They were not working men that broke Henry VI.'s nose at Eton.

The germs of decent enjoyment exist in the common mind, and only need a little culture to bring them into blossom. If pietism would but leave off pulling long, ugly faces at us, and if some pains were taken to create a better taste in those whose only taste is drink, we should be a very enjoying, and yet a very decorous, population. One of the first steps towards this consummation is, not to be so terribly afraid that the people will abuse every boon, every advantage, and every holiday.

I confess I am much more afraid of abuse in a different quarter. This near conjunction of Sunday and Christmas will give opportunity to pulpit-thumpers of doubly redoubled strokes. I fear that Catholics may be found bethumping Protestants, and Protestants bethumping Catholics, at a season when both should be employed in preaching peace and good-will. Over many a pulpit orator the star of Bethlehem will blaze with a sulphurous flame.

There may be a pause in the Crimean warfare, but there is no truce in the more ferocious conflicts of polemical theology. Would that they would all make holiday, by giving their tongues a little rest from excommunications and vituperations! They make but a bass response to the song of angels. If any preachers do—as there is too much reason to fear some will—fall into this fault on Sunday, let us hope that the Monday's rest may prepare them to celebrate the Saviour's birth in a better spirit. The danger of this sort of abuse makes one still more earnest in pleading for that Monday holiday, when sights of nature, the

sense of repose, innocent enjoyments, and social affections, may attune the people's minds, and put them in a becoming state for the appropriate celebration of Him who came to enforce on his disciples the great law of loving one another.

December 16, 1855.

THE CHURCH AND FREEDOM.

The repetition of church-rate battles, which we so often have to chronicle, shows that "there is something rotten," not "in the state of Denmark," but in the Church of England. The rottenness is in much more than in the rates. It is in the absurdity of old ecclesiastical laws,—the enormous disproportion of clerical incomes,—the superstitious aggrandisement of merely formal observances,—the absence of all control in the people over the appointment or removal of their ministers,—and the swearing of those ministers to an obsolete, complicated, and contradictory creed, in the whole of which nobody believes. Call us an enlightened people, indeed! Why, in principle, though not quite in degree, we are as priest-ridden as the stupid and bigoted peasantry of Spain or Naples. Let us carry torchlight, if we cannot force the admission of daylight, into the den of darkness. There are chinks which open wider and wider—work away at them; and though generations may first pass away, our descendants may yet walk in the sunshine and glory of a spiritual Church.

Well, then, there is work enough for the people to do; enough to task all their energies, their patience, and their industry. It is of such varied kinds, that it adapts itself to all natures and every diversity of requirement. Each may find his mission. For every one there must be something calculated to interest his feelings and excite his mind. Shame on the idler in such a world as this! he flinches from "the work which God has given him to do." That same Providence which invites us to subdue the material world for human benefit, and charters it for our inheritance, also calls us to the cultivation of the moral world,

and promises to our labours therein an abundant harvest. The motive is strong, the recompense is ample; and I would fain hope that the exertion will be proportionate, both in its strength and its endurance.

December 30, 1855.

SABBATARIAN AGITATION.

To the Rev. Joshua Kingsmill.

THROUGHOUT your pamphlet you assume the high ground of abstract and absolute right. You identify the law of the sabbath with the religion of the Bible. Now, to oppose Sabbatarianism is with you "false religion" or "infidelity." The use of our eyes on the Sunday is sabbath desecration, and those who differ from you "have arrayed against them the whole religious mind of their country." This is very bold and unwarrantable language, in reference to a dogma which has at no time commanded the assent of a majority of professing Christians, which has no real support either from scripture or tradition, and which is, in fact, confined to a section of religionists, and to the last three centuries in the history of that section. Such lofty assumptions should rest upon a broader basis; they should be characterised by more consistency.

You talk of the fourth commandment, and you lead the verbal prayers of your congregation "to keep that law." But you do not keep it. The law is for the observance of the seventh day, and you transfer it to the first without any recorded repeal or even modification. No evangelist or apostle has given any authority for the transfer of the seventh day to the first. That law, moreover, was for the observance of a day, not reckoned from midnight to midnight, but from sunset to sunset. Supposing the day altered, you are still a sabbath-breaker; and the stated hours are surely as important as the stated day! May I ask, too, as to the mode of observance? Do you not avail yourself of the help of any servant on the Sunday? Hear

what the Jews say on that question in a recent publication: "Were the 'Lord's-day' a real substitute for the Sabbath, not the rattling of a wheel, not the clang of a horse's hoofs, would be heard on that day in our streets from sunset on Saturday night to sunset on Sunday evening; not a fire would burn during that period on any hearth, nor a streak of smoke hover over any chimneys; for it is clearly and distinctly prescribed in the law, 'that thy cattle, and thy male servant, and thy female servant shall rest;' and again, 'Ye shall not kindle a fire in any of your habitations on the sabbath-day.'" These reflections cut too deeply into the carnal satisfaction of the saints and the table luxuries of the Lord's people ever to be imposed in this country. But the folks whom you have stirred up and set in motion are threatening a very respectable approximation. According to your suggestion, and pieced out with passages from your pamphlets, drafts of memorials are in circulation, for adoption by Sunday-school teachers, by clergymen, by parishes, and by women. And some of them go the length of praying, not only that the Crystal Palace, British Museum, &c., may not be opened, but that the music of the bands at Windsor, in Kensington Gardens, and elsewhere may be stopped, that the carriage-gates of the parks may be locked, that Sunday journals may not be circulated, that shops and public-houses may be altogether closed, that boats and vessels may not ply on canals and rivers, and that railway-trains may cease to run, even for the transmission of the mails and the delivery of letters. The clergy promise that if all these things are done, they will pray for a special blessing on the Lords and Commons,—who truly will stand greatly in need thereof.

In your gaol experience, you say, you are called upon "to minister in a prison to few but sabbath-breakers," and you quote the late chaplain of Clerkenwell as unable to recollect a single case of capital offence where the party had not been a sabbath-breaker. This is no doubt true; it cannot be otherwise. All men are sabbath-breakers on your principles. It is only, therefore, to say that they are human. The implied connection of sabbath-breaking with crime is a sheer fallacy. There are hundreds of thousands of sabbath-breakers who do not fall into crime for one who does. It might as well have been said, that no prison-

chaplain can recollect the commission of a capital offence unless by a man with two legs, allowing for the exceptional case of one sometimes being a wooden leg. The real connection is not so much between sabbath-breaking and crime, as between Sabbatarian instruction and crime. You hammer into a child's mind that there is sin in the thousand things, some one or other of which it is morally certain he would do on some Sunday or other. What is the result? You make him inevitably a conscious sinner. You give the first break-down blow to the dominion of conscience in his mind. He is thus prepared for another defalcation, which may probably be of a more important description. By your impossible restrictions you have launched him on the descent into guilt. Down he slides; and then you lift up your hands, and turn up your eyes, and exclaim, "See the consequences of sabbath-breaking!" You might more justly say, "See the consequences of parsonic Sabbatarian instruction!"

The people—the inert and too often over-awed people—have, then, a formidable confederation to confront, which is determinedly opposed to their reasonable wishes. I trust there is sufficient appreciation of the object to rouse them to a manful assertion of their rights. We ask nothing immoral, nothing irreligious, nothing subversive of social order and decorum. We only ask to use the organs and see the sights which God and nature have given us, or that art which is a species of inspiration, and the enjoyment of which is granted to the human race. If we quietly submit to be precluded from this good, we deserve that priestcraft, with its whole regiment of fanatical followers, should ride roughshod over us to the end of our days.

February 10, 1856.

WOMAN'S RIGHT TO PROPERTY.

THE question has been carefully kept within the narrowest limits that the most devoted bit-by-bit reformer, or "proved-grievance" reformer, could possibly desire, and yet it is very wide in its social extent. It affects all ranks; from the titled lady who ekes out an insufficient revenue by literary composition, to the humble labourer in the factory, or the poor drudge of a charwoman whose drunken husband wastes her hard earnings at the pothouse. Women with talent for music or art have been left to become the prey of adventurers fortunate enough to win their good graces, but who sought only to win their hands that they might live upon their voices. Such instances are very well known.

Merchants, too, have speculated upon propping a fallen trade by a fortunate marriage. They have endeavoured to imitate M. Malibran, though without finding such a mine of wealth as Maria Garcia. Various circumstances in the present day have made women—both married and single—their own bread-winners to a much greater extent than heretofore. In common fairness they ought at least to have as much protection as the stronger sex. In some respects the change is by no means to be regretted; it diminishes the motives to mercenary marriages, and that must do much both for the character of women and the happiness of matrimony. In the Marriage Service the bridegroom is made to say, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." Will the Church continue to tolerate the enunciation of a falsehood so gross in the Divine presence on so solemn an occasion? Should it not rather make him say, "With all thy worldly goods thou me endowest; with thyself, too, and all thy capabilities, and whatever thou mayst earn or inherit in the future"? I hope the clergy will require this change, or else that they will promote an amendment of the law and of the ceremony, so as to bring them into a reasonable conformity with one another. Perhaps they will think of this, when they have a little recovered from the present paroxysm of Sabbatarian fever.

February 24, 1856.

The woman's-property question is one in which the present state of society must make progress, and that rapidly. It belongs to the advance of civilisation. Woman can no longer be, what matrimony has too often made her, a plaything for the wealthy man, and a beast of burden for the poor. She has partaken, in her due proportion, in the general diffusion of intelligence, the general perception and claim of right, and the general obligation to work. Woman is acquiring a more substantive existence. It will be no longer practicable to keep her in the state of unreasoning and helpless submission to which she was formerly consigned. She aspires to be what poets have imagined, but what legislators, who look only to precedent; divines, who are only guided by tradition and prejudice; and writers, who cater for the cant of insolent and vulgar minds,—would still endeavour to forbid — "a being breathing thoughtful breath." Any one who understands the interests of humanity must rejoice in this progress. He must be glad to see that women are no longer content with the voice of an echo and the colour of a chameleon. He will rejoice at the voluntary intellectual exertion of the wealthier amongst them, and at the various modes now opening to the poorer portion of the sex for gaining an honourable subsistence by useful occupation. It is satisfactory to know that higher and purer aims now present themselves to the minds of many than the one speculation of getting married, or the cultivation of superficial accomplishments.

More intelligent sympathy must be felt, and welcomed as a blessing, by all those who are engaged in the more arduous occupations of mankind, whether of professional toil, of commercial enterprise, or of public usefulness. The capabilities of woman are unfolding, her character is rising, and her horizon is expanding. Legislation must accommodate itself to this change. It must not dream of continuing restrictions which treat woman as a helpless, unreasoning, and irresponsible being. With the enlarging sphere of occupation, exertion, and duty, there must also be an enlarging recognition of rights and privileges. It is not asked that law should anticipate the future character and position of woman; but, at least, it ought not to lag so very far behind the actual advance which has been

made, nor accumulate upon its future reform the arrears of centuries.

July 6, 1856.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

UNITY with the Church, indeed! Why, the Church is not in unity with itself! It blows hot and cold, it paints black and white with the same brush. The Articles, the Canons, and the Prayer-book are a huge mass of contradictions, all of which they affirm may be proved by the word of God, which word in many points they contradict also. Such a unity as this is, in vulgar terms, all humbug; in a well-known phrase, it is "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare." It cannot be obtained, and if it could, it would not be worth having. There never has been unity in the Church of England, and by such means there never will. Sometimes a Popish spirit has predominated, and sometimes a Protestant. It long vibrated, like a pendulum, between Calvinism and Arminianism. Bigotry has reigned at one time, laxity at another. The ethics of Epictetus have changed places with the mysterious speculations of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Now it has stimulated the mob to pelt the Methodists, and anon it has talked of opening its arms to fold them to its bosom. Its unity at this moment is but that of Janus, and its two faces have two voices—one of which talks Puseyism, and the other Evangelicalism. It is time to give over this vain attempt; it does violence to human nature; it organises hypocrisy and calls it unity; it fails in Ireland, where the constant presence of a hostile, powerful, and popular Church might be expected to compel some degree of unity in self-defence; it fails in England, from the mere force of that tendency to free thought which accompanies the stage of intelligence and civilisation at which we have arrived; and as to the Colonies, why, it is sheer craziness to suppose that they will long be bound down by the cobweb chains of English formularies. No sceptre of dogma can reach to the antipodes; no canonical unity is hardy enough to cross the broad Atlantic unim-

paired; it is of the very essence of thought to assert its own freedom. The attempt of the Church at unity violates the inherent principles and the resistless impulses of human nature. No discipline can enforce it, whether clerical or laic, parliamentary or canonical. If the Church means to retain its position permanently, it should proclaim freedom of thought and speech to its members and its ministers. No vigilance of bishops — though pretending to divine authority and divine omniscience, and exercising the most despotic jurisdiction over their subordinates—can establish such a unity in reality, or, were it established, preserve it for twenty-four hours. All these disciplinary contrivances only act upon the external semblance. Nay, who can answer for the perfect unity of the bishops themselves? They are but men, after all; and men will think, and those who will think have a tendency to think differently. Freedom of thought and speech is the character of Christianity and the law of humanity. Interfere if you will, and if you think it necessary, to keep the clergy sober and decent; but do not interfere either to threaten or to bribe them into insincerity, conventionalism, hypocrisy, and all that train of vices which finds its climax in perjury for the sake of gain and greatness. Church and State will do well, with all their discipline, to tolerate the maxim of the Apostle, and "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

April 27, 1856.

IRISH EDUCATION AND THE CHURCH.

The Church party wants to make Irish education like English education. They say, that all sects, Churches, and denominations are endowed here without any attempt to fuse them in a national plan of mixed education, and why should it not be so in Ireland? Why, for this reason: that the difference tells strongly in its results in favour of the Irish system. That system accomplishes two things, which in England are vainly desiderated. It keeps pace with the progress of the population, which English educa-

tion cannot do. In this country—with all our means and appliances, and with all our boasted progress—the number of the uneducated continually increases. It has done so from year to year; both when voluntary subscriptions were tried alone, and since they were aided by parliamentary grants. In Ireland, under the national system, the reverse has been the case; the number of the uneducated is in a state of regular diminution. It lessens, not only in proportion to the population, but absolutely from year to year. This is one preëminence. Another is, that in England our gaols are filled, not with the utterly untaught, but with those who have been to school, and came out imperfectly instructed. Such constitute the mass of our criminals. In Ireland, on the contrary, they are a constantly diminishing proportion. Education shows itself there, what it fails of being here, a barrier against crime. And this I unhesitatingly attribute to the better education conferred by the national system to that imparted by our denominations. Instead of lowering Irish instruction to the English level, the wiser course would be to raise English instruction to the Irish level. Our aim, as well as that which has been contemplated there, should be united schools for secular teaching for all, with separate religious instruction for those who wish or need it.

June 22, 1856.

RELIGION AND EDUCATION.

In all ages, in all countries, and in all religions, priestcraft and education have been found antagonistic. Ancient or modern, heathen or Christian, Catholic or Protestant, it makes no difference. The hostility is natural and essential. The Jewish priesthood crucified Christ because he was a teacher; Socrates with his cup of hemlock, and Galileo in the dungeon of the Inquisition, are only different versions of the same story. Had Socrates or Galileo founded a priesthood, that priesthood would have done the same with those who went beyond the instructions of the founders.

To the priest, knowledge is the great devil; and truly knowledge does sometimes play the devil with him and his dogmas. In proportion as science has advanced in the world, dogma has retired. An edifying catalogue might be formed of the doctrines called "Christian," and generally received, of which the progress of science has, one by one, compelled the abandonment. Miraculous interpositions, violations of the laws of nature, are now chiefly looked for and believed in by the very superstitious. Astronomy has made havoc with Catholic dogma, and geology with Protestant dogma. A local heaven and a local hell are both in danger of vanishing entirely from our religious maps. Insurance offices do not calculate that dutiful children are certain of long lives. Anatomy and ethnology have proved that, though humanity has one nature, it includes various races. Moses is in desperate peril, notwithstanding that, as Dr. Chalmers argued, he lived so much nearer the creation than we do, that he must know more about it. A verbal and plenary inspiration is scouted by every man of common sense.

The parsons, and their journeymen the Sunday-school teachers, are in a deadly fright. Knowledge spreads a light that dazzles their eyes. They run to and fro, and stumble over one another. And here springs up the real antagonism. The Church is in danger, religion is in danger, and, most of all, the priest or parson, with his old stock-in-trade, is in danger. What is to be done? Fence education round with tests; commit it only to the charge of religious bodies; dam up the fountains of knowledge, and only let its waters flow when they have had a sufficient admixture of orthodoxy; swear all the parsons, and let them swear all the schoolmasters; allow no teacher to be independent of some sect or Church; cram every young mind with doctrine—it will colour every thing that afterwards comes into that mind, even to the multiplication table or the decimal coinage; let priesthood master the mental world, as Popery once aspired to master the political world. What cannot be prevented may yet be directed.

This, sir, is the feeling which prevails in the priestly classes. It is this which throws all sorts of obstruction in the way of a free and general training of the young mind of the country, and which dreads the exercise of its faculties

and the enlargement of its stores and views. So education is limited; and, after almost half a century of effort, we find the number of totally uninstructed persons actually and largely on the increase. So education is perverted, and our gaols are crammed with criminals who "read and write imperfectly," and whose school-days have been confined to catechisings. All agree that education must be based upon the rock of religion; and so, with all their might, they build it upon the quicksand of priestcraft; and down it will come some day, priestcraft and all, and "great will be the fall thereof."

To the honestly religious laity I would make my appeal to stop this nuisance, to abolish this factitious antagonism of religion and education. I would say to them: Think for yourselves, and bring your common sense into active exercise upon this vital question. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion; she is simply the nurse of superstition. To the uncultivated mind the grandest religious proposition is merely unmeaning words. The first work of education is to awaken the faculties. Train to inquiry before you allow of training to belief. Develop humanity before you begin with Christianity.

Your priests and parsons are too much of mere word-mongers to be allowed a decisive influence over the instruction and training of the young. They fear heresy above all things, and so fill the field with orthodoxy that they plant out intelligence. On you it devolves to assert the rights of the rising generation. Your power over schools and parliaments renders you deeply responsible. Do not, I implore you, allow the training-up of a priest and parson-ridden England, that shall be the scoff and scorn of enlightened minds all the world over, and level our country with the worst portion of the population of Spain and Italy.

August 3, 1856.

THE IRISH CHURCH QUESTION.

Something more is supported by an Establishment besides creeds and forms. There must of necessity be a clergy; there most naturally and probably is a hierarchy. We have, then, a class, a corps, a profession, more or less organised, from a minimum in Scotland to a maximum in England. The minimum does not work well; but with that we have not now to do. I take our own Establishment as exhibiting the social organisation which ought to secure its abolition. The people are nothing in the Church. They have nothing to do with the clergy but to hear them and pay them. Through a long gradation of ranks, this class is in contact with society to farm the resources of society on its own account. It legislates with the authority of the peerage, and it plagues the parish with the bigotry of the curate. Its established revenues are enormous, and yet it is always on the watch for stray plunder. It has pickings in the Colonies, in school grants, in masterships of endowed seminaries, in chaplaincies, and in every conceivable direction where pelf is to be gathered. Its influences extend over the potent aristocracy and the most ignorant masses of the population. It is a veritable *imperium in imperio*. And as it never dies, so does it never cease to grasp and appropriate. The existence of such an organised body is full of peril to any community. The promotion of pure and undefiled religion is not to be expected of it; but the self-aggrandisement of the corporation, the grasping ceaselessly at power and wealth, are to be expected—are, in fact, realised—and constitute a cogent reason for its abolition.

The general hostility of the clergy to the repeal of the Corn Laws was an instance of their interference to obstruct the material prosperity of the country. Not less ready are they to impede its intellectual and moral prosperity. Their hostility has hitherto proved fatal to any general and efficient scheme of national education. Professing friendliness to instruction, they have been its deadliest foes. External forms and sabbatical observances are their idols. For any great act of intolerance, they have always an organised zeal in readiness for action. On science they

look askance, and square its discoveries to antique cosmogonies. In fact, through all the departments of individual and national progress we may be sure of their hostility. Their affinities are with despotism, or with such a substitute for despotism as the constitution of this country allows, viz. Toryism. As a matter of course, we reckon upon their being generally ranged against the people in any popular contest. Why should we cherish, reward, and hug to our hearts this vigorous influence? Religion can do without it—better without than with it; and knowledge, truth, freedom, progress, will all have a more free course by its abolition.

September 21, 1856.

CONSECRATED GROUND.

And if we turn from the unconscious dead to the living who think and feel, in what can they be the holier or the happier, the more consoled for the loss of those who are gone, or the more loving towards those who remain, for the keeping-up of this ceremony? Those whose senseless forms are deposited in unconsecrated ground may yet as securely "sleep in the Lord." So sleep multitudes of those whose piety has adorned our country. They are the best consecration of the ground to which they are committed. The sod under which are piled the remains of the heroes of Inkermann was as holy before some miserable bishop was sent to mumble his benedictions over it as ever he could make it. But the great evil of consecration is, that it is only another word for separation. It divides Christians; it outrages humanity; it falsifies scripture: "The rich and the poor meet together in the grave; the Lord is the maker of them all." Yes, it answers, but he has not made them all Churchmen; so they shall not lie down in the dust together. The rich and the poor *may* meet; but not the Churchman and the Dissenter. Can that institution be called either national or Christian which thus carries the intolerance of its distinctions and divisions

beyond the limits of our mortal being, and asserts them in the face of that great teacher of universal charity, Death? Is it worthy to be called a Church at all? In some, at least, of its doings, and this amongst them, it has more resemblance to a "whited sepulchre."

The poets are better teachers of piety and morality than professed theologians. If you want to be taught the doctrine of consecration better than a bishop, read Campbell's poem beginning—"What's hallowed ground?" His answer is, that love, heroism, martyrdom, are the true consecrating powers, and not "incantations" or "pompous rites in domes august."

> "What's hallowed ground? 'tis what gives birth
> To sacred thoughts in souls of worth!
> Peace! Independence! Truth! go forth
> Earth's compass round;
> And your high priesthood shall make earth
> *All hallowed ground.*"

That is natural consecration, and the embodiment and purification and elevations of such feelings are Christianity. The forms are as artificial as the fees by which they are purchased. The Church of England had a bishop once who could see and love this natural beauty, and desiderated for himself an appropriate funeral to crown his "holy living and dying." It is lovelier than any technical consecration could make it. "I desire," says Bishop Taylor, "to die a *dry death*, but am not very desirous to have a *dry funeral*. Some flowers sprinkled upon my grave would do well and comely, and a soft shower to turn those flowers into a springing memory, or a fair rehearsal, that I may not go forth of my doors as my servants carry the entrails of beasts." Heaven consecrates our graves by its rain and sunshine; that is enough.

October 12, 1856.

ON NATURAL EDUCATION.

By "Natural Education" I mean that kind and degree of education which Providence, by means of man's constitution, his circumstances, and the events of his life, bestows upon every human being; an education much more important, as compared with what we are able to bestow upon one another, than is generally imagined, and one which may serve both for strength and encouragement under the difficulties which impede the voluntary and human diffusion of instruction and knowledge, and also, perhaps, serve in some measure to guide the mode in which, when opportunity offers, it is bestowed.

The last parliament decidedly set its face against any plan whatever for a really national education; nor were there any promising omens of the success of Sir John Pakington's compromise,—the best which has yet claimed the attention of the legislature. From the new parliament we seem only likely to have a continuance of the present mongrel compound of voluntaryism, sectarianism, and Privy-Council interference, which has already expended so much of the public money to so little purpose. It is becoming evident that a national education must originate with the people; and yet how many of the people are still at sea as to the very first principles and elementary constituents of a real education? Under such discouragement one's mind is forced back upon those first principles and essential elements; and it is to the train of thought to which I have been thus driven that I would now call attention.

Education, in the largest sense of the word, implies three processes,—instruction, development, and guidance: instruction, by which the knowledge of facts is communicated to the mind that is under tuition; development, by which the powers and faculties of the pupil are called into exercise, so as to make proper use of those facts and that knowledge; and guidance, that the powers thus attained may have a direction which tends to the well-being of the individual and society. By the first, instruction, we communicate knowledge, knowledge very often essential to the safety and the progress of the human being; by the development of the faculties we make the discerning man; and

by the moral training of those faculties, the honest and good man.

Now, education is imperfect if any one of those three processes be neglected, or if any one be made disproportionately to absorb the rest. The absence of the first, instruction, only turns out an ignoramus in the world, an uninformed being, whose mind is a blank, where there ought to be the conception of objects and events; a state like that in which Sunday-schools leave too many—leave thousands of the children of this country—until, in the rural districts, we have numbers of people growing up to maturity, or already matured, ignorant of the commonest things which one would suppose essential to their physical condition, ignorant of the number of months in a year, of shillings in a sovereign, or of ounces in the pound. We have the ignoramus in higher positions, many of the teachers of those persons; one of whom recently, in reply to a question by a school-inspector, classed Sir Isaac Newton and the *Principia* among the poets and poetry of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. And where this evil is removed, there is an opposite evil as great, in bestowing the name of education on instruction merely. This consideration of instruction merely as education makes a pedant, and we have the pedant in contrast with the ignoramus already described; both showing us that we must go onward in these processes, and must attend to their harmonious operation. If we confine education to the first and second processes only, instruction and development, we have not then either the ignoramus or the pedant, but we are not unlikely to have a knave.

But if the first and second processes are not unlikely to give us the knave as the result of education—as the absence of the first gives the ignoramus, and the first alone gives the pedant—so the trial of the third process alone, that of moral training without the other two, gives us the superstitious fool. And this is practically the great end and aim, or at any rate the result, of those endeavours to educate the people, the poor especially, by theological means only — to instil moral precepts without knowledge and without discernment. What can happen but the very blindest superstition, the grossest slavery to priestcraft, the utmost readiness to take up with any wild notion which any fanatic by his energy may raise to a temporary popu-

larity? Some specimens of this sort of thing may be seen even in the boasted pupils of ragged schools. For instance, such as the boy sent home with a pair of boots, and forgetting the direction, in his despair he prayed to the Lord, and somebody came and told him the street and the number. This was ostentatiously chronicled in the public papers by the officials of those institutions as an instance of what they could accomplish in the children. It shows what they can accomplish; it shows what such means ever will accomplish. They will make those who will rely on praying when they should be thinking, who will be bending their knees when they should be using their arms, and be performing their genuflexions when they ought to be exercising their wits and their physical powers. The combination is that on which the value of the whole depends. And the combination, under the direction of a single teacher, is most desirable, and not in itself very impracticable. In those to whom Heaven has given the mission of instruction—and how many such there are!—there is always the tendency to call into exercise the varied powers of their pupils' minds, and to guide them, not only to the immediate, but to the highest kind of exercise. For such is the affinity of these processes, that each may be exercised in and by the others. They have no natural antagonism; they have even no natural independence; but the one runs, as it were, into the other —the material into the spiritual—as when the child learns, and learns as a matter of course, "to look through nature up to nature's God;" or as when the classical runs into the patriotic, as in the case of the pupil

> "By ancient learning to th' enlightened love
> Of ancient freedom warmed."

And in this way do the appropriate impressions of each process harmonise, and show their innate affinity, resulting in a practical code of ethics; not, indeed, like that which theologians teach; not a code of ethics in which morality is obedience to an arbitrary law,—mere predominance of will over will; not a code of ethics which is fashioned to act upon a servile and slavish position or state of mind, which enforces a crouching submission and an unreasoning obedience; not a code of ethics in which the things to be done are things which benefit no human creature, either

the doer of them or any of his fellow-creatures, but are simply supposed to have some sort of worth preternaturally bestowed upon them, as compliances with a preternatural command; not ethics which need rewards and punishments, crowns of glory and palm-branches, or undying fires,—but a code of ethics which shows God in nature, and thereby blesses man in society.

But this cannot be in the state of society in which we exist. Sectarianism forbids. Its denunciation is loud against every such combination. Sectarianism will prescribe what shall be taught, what shall not be taught,—what shall be made most important, what least important; and on the ruins of every kind of knowledge it will erect and plant its own creed. And hence it is that every effort is baffled, and that to realise any thing that may amount to education is rendered impossible by contending religious bodies. Why, what an opprobrium is this upon our country!—our country, as we fondly believe, for literature, arts, and arms the first of nations, but not the fourth, fifth, or scarcely the sixth, as to the extent of popular education; our country, so abundant in material wealth, and yet so niggardly of bestowing intellectual riches upon the poor, who are capable of their reception; our country, so proud of its triumphs and of its position, and yet abandoning to the lowest degradation millions of those in whom humanity might be developed through its agency, and the form and spirit of God made visible in his creatures. There is no object of natural honour, safety, prosperity, glory, and progress,—there is no object in all these to be achieved, that would yield so prompt and abundant a harvest as the production of wiser and more extensive methods of education.

However, though man may neglect or oppose,—though, in the name of religion, education may be obstructed, hindered in its most important processes, and deprived of its most beneficent results,—still there is education in the world. God educates, if man does not; Providence imparts a certain amount of instruction, however man may withhold that which it is in his power to bestow. Something of this is common to the whole human race. Mankind has never been abandoned to utter helplessness and black night.

Yes, there is education in the world, given and received, without books; though, even in this case, it is not to be

assumed that books have not their influence, and that a mighty one; for they make a nation live in an intellectual atmosphere. Thoughts thus recorded and preserved affect the minds of generations, and spread themselves far beyond the readers, the admirers, the students of such works. Through their minds they act upon other minds, until the intellect of a whole country is affected; and there probably is not a boy or a young artisan in the country, however ignorant, whose mind is not in some respect the wiser and the better for the writings of such men as Bacon, Milton, Shakespeare, Locke, and Newton, whose names have never reached his ears, and though their productions, if put in his way, would be to him only a sealed volume.

Now, in this natural education we have much to induce us to study, and, as far as we can, to imitate. For how is it that nature educates? How, but by objects, and not by words? How, but by employing the more intelligent to act upon, guide, influence, stimulate the less intelligent? How, but by realising the lessons of experience? What are the seasons, but God's picture-lessons for his children's study,—the moving panorama, in which every scene, while it attracts the senses, has something which should sink into the soul? How marvellously are these operations combined in what I will call natural education! The child looks upon the daisy, and only admires the pretty thing; the philosopher looks on it, and it leads him to recondite speculations, and calls on him for the exercise of a vast fund of knowledge. The infinite includes the minutest as well as the grandest within its scope, and education is the work of nations as well as of individuals. An instructed world, an educated world, will be a wise, a peaceful, a prosperous, a rapidly advancing world. And, for ourselves, we should remember that our work of self-culture thus stimulated, our individual work, is not that of the years of childhood merely; it belongs to the whole of our being, in which we must profit by natural education as well as by all human aids which we can call in for our benefit. This is the work of year after year; self-education is the business of our mortal lives to the very hour of death; and if, we be indeed immortal, it will be our task to all eternity.

April 5, 1857.

PARLIAMENTARY ELOQUENCE.

While so many are speculating upon what the new parliament will do, there are some who are curious upon what the new parliament will say, and how it will say what it may have to say. Of the 170 new members who have been called to be senators, how many of them will turn out orators? The *Times* lately congratulated the country on not being likely to have a talking parliament. But parliament acts by talking. Its words are deeds; and a speech is often more influential throughout the country, and over Europe, and to the world's end, than are the votes and motions with which it may be connected. It has always seemed to me the great defect of Carlyle's wonderfully graphic *History of the French Revolution* that it contains no record of the utterances of those flaming tongues which in the National Assembly fired the hearts of men, and set a-blaze so many venerated conventionalisms. Are there any latent Mirabeaus in the 170? We are waiting for them to reveal themselves. I have not yet heard of any who have talked their way into the House of Commons. Some have fought their way there by hired bludgeons; some have bought their way there by golden sovereigns; and some have canted their way there by hypocritical speeches; but none that I know of have spoken their way there, and won an election as the crown of oratory. So, as the *Times* seems to hope, we shall have a House full of good listeners; one in which the old leaders will tilt at each other in the old fashion, while the main bodies will hearken, admire, cheer, and "as many as are of that opinion will say Aye, of the contrary No, and the Ayes will have it." Some countenance is given to this anticipation of the *Times* by the general spirit and results of the late elections. No disposition was evinced by the constituencies generally to choose remarkable men,—whether for boldness of thought, consistency of character, or fluency of expression. On the contrary, the tendency was rather to avoid such men. All that was wanted was somebody that would support Palmerston. That was the *sine quâ non*. It stood for patriotism, intellect, eloquence, and every thing else. And yet, who can tell what chance may not have done for us? Out of this undis-

tinguished multitude may start some one with a voice whose music will charm the adder, whose thunder shall shake the palatial towers of Westminster, and whose potent tones shall "create a soul under the ribs of death." Some tribune of the people may appear, who shall make aristocracy cower before the demand of their rights; or some apostle of European liberty, who shall cry to the nations till continents and islands echo back his voice. It may be so,—who can tell? We must wait to see; and if we have not representatives who can and will speak for us, we must try and speak for ourselves as best we may.

A perfect orator is, as I conceive, one who combines the qualifications of being able to convince the reason, to dazzle the imagination, and to inflame the passions. Not that we can ever expect to find all these powers in their highest degree united in the same individual. Of the two great models of eloquence in antiquity, Demosthenes excelled in the first and third qualifications, and Cicero in the second and third. Hence Demosthenes exercised more power, and Cicero won more admiration. In modern times we find—as must, indeed, ever be found, until humanity be much more highly developed—a similar absence of the entire combination, and a similar prominence of one or more of the elementary requisites. The eloquence, for instance, of Chatham was that of passion—of manly, vigorous, overbearing passion—which carried all before it. The blasting lightning, the rushing torrent, the sweeping whirlwind, and all such metaphors, were put in requisition to describe it, and they do constitute its appropriate description. Burke had comparatively little of this species of oratorical power; his strength was in the philosophical and imaginative; he uttered the profoundest truths, and arrayed them in the most beautiful colours; the judgment smiled in serene satisfaction, and the fancy revelled in rainbow visions; but the soul was not aroused, the excitement was only for the thinker and the poet, and so Burke became the "dinner-bell" of the House of Commons. The eloquence of Fox, it has been justly said, was in his logic. Every sentence was an argument, or what seemed so; axioms and corollaries rolled on in lucid sequence, till you felt that, if you were not convinced, you ought to be so. Hence his constant readiness, and his excellence in reply. This made him

"the most accomplished debater the world ever saw." His opponent, Pitt, was much less remarkable intellectually. He was rhetorical rather than eloquent, and plausible rather than argumentative. Of the other orators of that day, Windham was only the reflex of Burke, Sheridan rested on his elaborated wit, and Grattan's power and skill were in antithesis. His declamation never flowed, but it flashed, beamed, sparkled, and darted. He made a point in every sentence, and every point made a puncture. He shook a hive of bees over you, and every one stung. Between those men and the orators of our own day in the House of Commons, there are two bright connecting links,—Brougham and Canning. English Liberalism followed, in mourning, the one into his grave, and the other into the House of Lords. In justice, I must add of Brougham, that he has given evidence of late that "e'en in our ashes live their wonted fires." Were I to analyse the two, I should say that Brougham was a mixture of Chatham and Fox; Canning a mixture of Chatham and Burke,—the Chatham element being subordinated in both. Neither of these great rivals is to be reckoned a mere House-of-Commons orator. Perhaps the finest displays of the eloquence of both occurred when they were pitted against each other in the Liverpool election of 1812, and at the close of each day's protracted poll excited and astounded assembled multitudes with splendours such as hustings oratory has never surpassed or equalled. No debates can match that conflict of electioneering eloquence: and yet the House of Commons is a good arena. It provides an audience that is numerous enough to excite the speaker. He has the stimulus of competition with rival orators. There is the check upon extravagance created by knowing that every absurdity will incur prompt ridicule, that every sophism is in peril of exposure, and that the slightest slip brings the danger of being tripped up. And, on some occasions, though they must needs be comparatively rare, there is the high and powerful impulse of helping to divide the victory between nearly balanced parties, and awarding to one or the other the spoils of victory, in the possession of office and the direction of the policy of the country.

The new aspirants for oratorical fame will not, therefore, have to complain of the lists in which they are to tilt, nor

of its exciting traditions of the exploits of former champions. I will add a few words on the living models whom it will afford for their emulation.

First in place and influence, and probably first in favour with the House, will be the Premier. He can scarcely be ranked as a first-class orator, with his ungraceful, hesitating a—a—a—utterance. Nor will his vulgar, common-place claptraps recommend him to a fastidious taste. His unscrupulous use of the most transparent sophisms, with an equally transparent carelessness whether they be sophisms or not, will also be disgusting to many minds. At the same time, his indomitable good humour, his pervading pleasantry, his ready and felicitous retorts, his amazing command of the details of a subject, and the ingenuity and dexterity with which he uses his materials—be they abundant or scanty—will make up for any deficiencies, and probably act upon the new parliament as they have often acted upon former parliaments. Those who remember the great effort of his life, the wonderful speech—in the Pacifico debate—in defence of his foreign policy, when, as Gladstone said, "from the dusk of one day to the dawn of another" the House hung upon his lips, will desiderate a higher species of eloquence from him than they will usually hear, and will rarely escape being disappointed.

Some disappointment will also probably be felt by the new members on first hearing Lord John Russell. It requires a great deal to rouse him to any thing like oratory. He speaks to the purpose, but very plainly, and in a manner that will be reckoned comparatively flat and dull. His attempts at humour usually end in a miserable failure. Years pass without his ever making such a hit as that upon the hustings about the "boy from Northampton." But his historical introductions are well put together; he is lucid and cogent in argument; he hits the weak point of an opponent's case with admirable skill and force; and, though only a second or third rate orator, he is a first-rate debater. On great occasions he gives appropriate and dignified utterance to noble sentiments, and the impression of his manner is strengthened by the impression of his character.

That is not exactly the praise that can be awarded to D'Israeli. Yet he is unquestionably the first orator in the

House,—the great master of the art of speaking. Well has he studied it in all its details, from the nicety of enunciation in his words to the perfection of construction in his orations. As his speech swells up to some lofty peroration, his voice resounds like the blast of a trumpet, and his whole frame seems to dilate and aggrandise itself upon the eye. His sarcasm is withering; his variety is wonderful. You are appalled, astonished, and amused all in a breath. His feeblest phase is precisely that in which Lord J. Russell is strongest; and the long introductory histories with which he sometimes commences are really tiresome. There is, too, the drawback all through of perceived artificiality. He has worked hard to become what he is, and to make himself the first-rate player of a party game.

His comrade in fight, Sir E. B. Lytton, is artificial too, but with less success as to manner, and more as to the polish of his style. He is not to be compared in enunciation, tone, or gesture; but he often mouths out sentences of exquisite beauty. They smell of the lamp, but the oil is fragrant.

Sir James Graham and Mr. Gladstone, the surviving pair of Peelites—*par nobile fratrum*—are a doughty brace of combatants. The former excels in hard blows, the latter in acute distinctions. Pithy sentences, in which he hits the nail on the head, and drives it home with the force of a sledge-hammer, distinguish Sir James. He has what has been described as the two requisites of a speech—"strikeability and stickability." The Protectionists never forgot his idea of the soldiers buying cheap bread on the repeal of the Corn Laws, "and they know the reason why." The words became the burden of a popular song, and worthily. Gladstone's aptitude for refining and making metaphysical distinctions, together with his nice conscientiousness as a speaker, might be supposed to imply feebleness; but that is not the fact. He is energetic in discrimination. Perhaps no man in the parliament ever grappled so stoutly with D'Israeli himself, or so fairly matched and floored him.

If the sweeping process of the late election scarcely left more than a brace of Peelites in the House, it has, according to the calculation of the *Quarterly Review*, just published, left only a single Radical of eminence—*at ille leo est*—I mean John Arthur Roebuck. He despises the arts

of oratory, and, despising them, realises their power. Without any thing extraneous or artificial, he simply and naturally enunciates the reflections of the accomplished political philosopher. A lucid and logical order is all that he studies, and that he realises. In sarcasm he is only inferior to D'Israeli; but there is a difference in the use of the weapon. The one handles it as a smooth, keen razor; the other wields it with fury and glitter, like a broad-sword.

Such are the models of parliamentary oratory bequeathed by the late parliament to the present. The new members can select according to their taste and judgment. None of them are perfect patterns, to be copied from indiscriminately; all of them have qualities to be appreciated, if not imitated. The path is open for young ambition; there is room to outstrip them all. Parliament has never yet borne its full harvest of oratorical fruit. Anterior to the Reform Act, its prevailing style was classical and statistical; the progress cannot end there. One can imagine a speaker whom yet the eye hath not seen nor the ear heard. When he shall arise, he must be more than a mere orator; he must be a true man, sound in thought, vivid in fancy, strong in feeling, and devoted to the cause of civil and religious liberty all the world over.

May 3, 1857.

A CALL TO THE PEOPLE.

The difficulties which impede national progress are, no doubt, vast and mighty. There is the influence of a proud aristocracy, that casts its "cold shade" far and wide; there is the constitutional power and authority of the House of Lords; there is the influence of its connections and nominees in the House of Commons; there is the money power in elections; there is the corruption of patronage over the electors; there is the mischief of open voting, the power of bribery and intimidation; there are the senseless cries of

party, so readily echoed by the multitude; there are often the excitements and perversions of the press, acting as the organ and agent of party; there are selfish and sinister interests, diffused through the mass of the community; there are the limitations of all direct electoral power to the select portion of the community which enjoys enfranchisement under the Reform Act. And there is something infinitely worse than all this,—the wide-spread indifference of the people to either home or foreign politics, and to principle which ought to dictate in all, and to possess our feelings as well as our intellects. It is not the ballot that we want, nor the right of voting, nor any of the thousand things that might be enumerated; it is patriotism, which should be the life and soul of all; which should make near realities where now we see only distant shadows; which should regulate the exercise of privileges where they exist, and supply their want where they have no existence; which should tear off masks, and trample on pretences, and dispel illusions; which should be as a conscience to the people, with its smiling sunshine and its appalling thunders, and restore us to unity, dignity, purity, power, and glory as a nation.

Could I but excite this, how little should I care for most of the questions which are agitated, for all the paraphernalia of the Constitution, for all the machinery of political action! They would sink into insignificance before a commanding public opinion, that would teach our rulers to "be just and fear not;" that would make them feel they had to sustain a character for the nation, and would raise them to the level of all its greatness and grandeur.

But how to excite it? One cannot but feel how vain are all one's words, how weak and feeble; and turn from them to that ally in the human bosom, which God and nature have implanted; "therein the patient must minister to himself," or all external wish and labour is to no purpose. We strike the note and listen, hoping for the echo, and relying entirely on the response. If the right string be touched, one would imagine thoughts such as these arising within the bosom of the individual:

"I have or I have not a vote,—what matters it? Independence is in the mind, or it is nowhere. If I have not, why,

that is freedom from the solicitations of the influential, which sound like commands; and still my notions, unfettered as they are, tell on the great mass of thought which they call public opinion. Or if I have a vote, why, I can use it. This or that customer will leave me. Well, let him go; perhaps others will come. It has been so with those who were strong enough to follow an independent course; and should it not be so, I still have that which no customer can buy, and which no employer can withhold, out of which no landlord can expel me,—a good conscience. They tell me to think of my family; I do think of them: and I will leave the memory of that as an inheritance to my children. They might succeed to a worse possession. I am a man, and will use the rights of a man. I am an Englishman, and that is something in the world — ay, it is something to boast of; for have we not worked our way from barbarism to civilisation? do we not bear the bell of the majestic world? have we not made this land at once the garden of Europe and the workshop of the world? have not our poets and patriots, both unrivalled, told us that it is our country's ancient prerogative to "teach the nations how to live"? We realised free institutions while the rest of Europe, after a few vain and impotent efforts, succumbed in base vassalage and feudalism first, and to despotism afterwards. Shall I now be a party to the depravation of those institutions,—to their becoming a mere shadow and sham, instead of expanding and developing themselves till they are coextensive with the entire community? It was not merely to other nations that our fathers were an example; they are so to us, their descendants; and no degenerate noble would more disgrace the name of his ancestry than I should dishonour that of my country were I faithless to the spirit that achieved its renown. The ocean parts us from the world; but seas now unite more than they separate. We are one with all the free spirits of the world; we sympathise with them in their struggles, mourn over their defeats, receive and shelter them in their exile; the imperial slave of an army shall not command us to be parties to their persecution. Our court may still dally with courts, our government may have its diplomatic secrets with governments; but we, as a nation, have nothing to say to others, want nothing of others, but what

we can declare openly. If wide Eastern regions fall beneath our rule, we have not sought them as conquerors; we desire only the fair interchange of trade, for their benefit as well as ours, and own only the dominion of justice and knowledge. If the energy and industry of our race impel us to overspread the world, it is that we every where bear the characteristics of our nation, and aspire every where to the wise, the just, and the free. Our domestic and our foreign policy are one; the same in principle and influence. And in this, and of this, I am a part,—aspiring not to be an unworthy one, but hoping that on my death-bed I may truly say that I leave the world better than I found it, and therein rejoice—not the less that my own thoughts, feelings, and conduct have, however humbly, yet in my station, contributed to the change."

Such is the spirit I desire to see prevalent, whatever becomes of forms or of party. "Nature might stand up, and say to all the world, This was a man;" not only a man, but a patriotic Englishman. I trust there are such, and that they will yet show themselves in sufficient number to redeem our country.

June 20, 1858.

GEORGE COMBE AND EDUCATION.

The great worth of the *Constitution of Man* is, that it struck at the root of that false morality which perverts education, pulpit instruction, and popular language. It shows the demonstrative proof in nature and fact that God governs the world, not by ceaseless interpositions, but by established laws; and that evil, mental or bodily, is only avoided by conformity with those laws. To teach these laws should, therefore, in Combe's view, be the great purpose of education.

Now, the paramount object of modern education, as practised by the sects and churches, as patronised by the government, and as too often understood by philanthropists, is to teach that plan of divine government which is ex-

emplified in the Bible. But the Bible is not the history of the ordinary government of the world; it is that of extraordinary interpositions, which are not known in our times, nor were known any where or at any time, unless in Syria, and during the period which sacred history comprises. Their application beyond that boundary is therefore false and misleading. The striking dead of Ananias and Sapphira for "lying against the Holy Ghost" may perhaps prove, as our Bible-schools teach, the doctrine of the Trinity; but it certainly does not prove that liars are struck dead in England nowadays. It is not to the Bible that we must look in such a case. It is to the natural and social consequences of lying. And so for other rules, we must look to facts—the facts of observation and of science; and these generalised into rules are really the substance of moral and natural philosophy, to which the Bible may contribute, but only with the proviso that we make due allowance for the peculiarity of its being the record of extraordinary interpositions, not of cause and effect as incessantly and every where operating. Even its simply preceptive portions are coloured by this peculiarity; and he who should take no "thought for the morrow" would very soon find himself beyond even the charitable help of the most devout believers.

The *Constitution of Man* has done immense good in clearing up people's ideas on this subject. It has taught them that a ship not seaworthy may founder, although its cargo were of Bibles, and every passenger a Christian missionary. It has taught them that a preacher may, by neglect of proper precautions, preach himself into a consumption, though every word be for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. And we only need the universal comprehension of the plain facts which it inculcates, to rectify the language of our pulpits every Sunday, and occasionally that of our statesmen, when they "deeply regret" that it has "pleased God" to cut short the career of a governor or hero.

And yet that is the way in which our sectarian schools teach our millions that God does govern the world. They talk it when they are grown up, and although experience has shown them that it is mere verbiage; and they have it inculcated upon children, so as to prolong the dominion

of cant from generation to generation. One of George Combe's services to secular education was his exertions to prove that it is not irreligious. He demolished the fallacy that, if you do not teach religion, you teach anti-religion. He showed that there is an essential religion in natural science, and that is enough to teach the child in so far as he is under the care of the schoolmaster. Mr. Combe not only connected himself with the movement for secular education, but he watched over the actual experiment; of which an interesting account is given in the several reports of the Williams' School in Edinburgh. This and the Birkbeck Schools in London, and the Model Secular School in Manchester, have completely established the success of the scheme in question.

Such, then, were George Combe's services in the cause of education—the only view which I proposed to take of them. They were availing in clearing the minds and encouraging the efforts of the many who really desire to see education universal, in its great work of developing and perfectionating the human faculties. They were unavailing, except as a protest, and in a gradual and often imperceptible influence, in reforming the schools which churches, sects, and governments patronise. No such man as George Combe was ever thought of by the Committee of Council on Education. He would not have been recommended, like the inspectors, by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He would not have identified himself with that Church job which cost the country some 50,000*l.* a year for nominal superintendence. He would not have chosen such a parrot babbler as the Honourable W. Cowper for his representative, or the amateur Adderley. He would not have selected such schools as that of Williams in Edinburgh, or that of Manchester, for exclusion from any grant of public money; while it is free, not only for Jews and Catholics, but also for any Southcotian or Mormonite who will open the schools by Scripture-reading. He was pure from the educational corruptions of the time; and when, hereafter, the trickery and cant shall have passed away which render our schools, not seminaries of instruction, but the juvenile proselytising shops of sectarianism, and they shall indeed become, and for universal enjoyment, the temples of knowledge and of progress, his name will be

gratefully remembered as that of one who ably aided in leading the country towards that consummation.

August 22, 1858.

THE BELIEF IN WITCHCRAFT.

NOTWITHSTANDING that two hundred years have elapsed since Boyle and Petty originated the Royal Society for the Advancement of Physical Science; that it is upwards of a century since parliament abolished the laws against witchcraft, deeming it an absurd and impossible crime; that colleges, museums, institutes, libraries, and schools are multiplied over the length and breadth of the land; and that we live in an age of rapid progress and wide discovery, not merely augmenting the knowledge of a class, like the priests of old Egypt, but spreading intellectual light over the whole mass of society,—there still exists a faith in sorcery, witchcraft, fortune-telling, spells, charms, &c., to a very large extent. The fact has not to be hunted out in the dark corners of the country; it does not wait for exploration: it stares us in the face; it obtrudes in our police and criminal courts; it confronts us in the broadsheets at breakfast time; the daily reports are not often, and the weekly are never, without it. How is this phenomenon of darkness, if one may indulge in such an incongruity of phrase, to be accounted for? What keeps up this doctrine of devils? While every child at school repeats, "I believe in God," what makes so many of them afterwards say practically, "I believe in the witch"? One authority tells us of the length of time that it takes to wear a superstition out of the ignorant mind, and treats this in particular as a portion of heathen superstition, tracing it to our unchristianised ancestry, and representing it as having hitherto defied the advances of the Gospel. But that solution will not do. Odin and the kindred deities of that theological system have for long ages vanished from the face of the land. Besides, the witchcraft of antiquity was different from that of modern

times. It was natural magic, and not preternatural compact with evil spirits. The more recent faith in witchcraft was the growth of what was called Christianity. It was rife in the middle ages. Priesthood made it an excuse for cruelty, and a pretext for destroying suspected heresy. The Romish Church burned for it by scores and scores of thousands. The English Establishment aimed at a monopoly, and an existing canon requires the authority of a bishop, as given by license to a clergyman, for exorcising the foul fiend. The Puritans and Nonconformists had their share in the persecution, as the records of New England—where they had their full swing—can abundantly testify. Even here, during the brief period that they held the power, they slew by hundreds, led by their sagacious bloodhound Hopkins, the witch-finder. Scotland, always most exemplary in religion, burned a witch so late as 1722. The faith, then, is no relic of heathenism; it was part and parcel of our prevalent Christianity. It is still so with those whose Christianity has not been corrected by science. The girl who on Tuesday last lodged her complaint against a "swarthy" sorceress, had been at a parish-school in Poole, and altogether had been ten years under tuition, and was evidently no fool; yet she came into this great world with the faith in witchcraft untouched. Other cases of late have been abundant. The Somerset farmer knows where to find the wise woman that will disenchant his horses. The witch's thrall frees himself by drawing blood,—the poor creature's life-blood. At East Thorpe witchcraft is common, and two witch-doctors are within easy distance of the village, to counteract the hag by whom one of its daughters is said to be plagued. In Bethnal Green and Whitechapel the nuisance is as common as the smallpox, that still defies vaccination. Some are diddled out of their money, and others are infested by vermin, which wonderfully vanish when she who sent them is herself sent to gaol. It will not do to say with the *Times*, that "Paganism lingered for many a year after St. Augustine, and, indeed, the rites of Scandinavian idolatry were said to be traceable in the Scottish Highlands as late as the last century;" or that "genuine enlightenment may have been advancing for years without absolutely effacing the vestiges of former superstition." The former is doubtless an historical, as the latter is a philosophical

truism; but they do not meet the case. They do not account for the fact of this absurdity surviving so long, and to such an extent, in a Christian and a scientific country. That is the event, most palpable and obtrusive, as well as deplorable, of which I would trace the cause.

And that cause I take to be the ancient Jewish faith in witchcraft; the Mosaic laws against it; the cases of it reported both in the Old Testament and in the New; and the general teaching, in churches, chapels, and schools, that the Bible is not merely to be taken historically and judged accordingly, but that every word in it is infallible and to be implicitly received. If that be so, a faith in witchcraft is inevitable; it follows by a logical necessity, and it belongs to the truths of Divine revelation.

For are there not the laws of Moses, denouncing capital punishment against the various practisers of witchcraft? Did not she of Endor raise Samuel from the dead to tell the fortunes of King Saul in the coming fight? Was not the possessed girl of Philippi oracular? Did not demons plague various persons of the Gospel narratives, and were there not magic words by which even unbelievers exorcised? It is impossible to resist the proof, unless we appeal to reason for decision on the record, and prefer common sense to the Church and clergy for the interpretation of the Bible.

But common sense is not preferred in churches and schools. For ten years was Jeannette Myers under scholastic and clerical care, and her faith in witchcraft was not abated; and so of hundreds and thousands. If apostles, whom they are taught to esteem infallible, believed in witchcraft, why should not they? It becomes their duty. The science that teaches the contrary is "carnal philosophy." Nor are possessions obsolete. A clergyman, not long ago, published his faith in devils having to do with table-turning and hat-twisting. To hear Satanic whisperings is no uncommon thing amongst the disciples of Wesley. These are natural fruits of the tree planted in youth, and watered on Sundays. The clergy dare not correct it, and the Sunday teacher will not. It would be an offence against the established bibliolatry of the nation. So we cherish the faith in witches and devils, and then wonder at it when it breaks out in society. Generations ago, science would have

crushed it,—survival in this age of general knowledge would have been an impossibility,—but that this fallacy of a universally infallible Bible history has stood in the way, is put in the way by powerful bodies of preachers and teachers, and sustains the monstrous absurdity.

On the priesthood, then, I distinctly charge the fact that this nonsensical credence, which is yet so fruitful in crime, not only lingers amongst us, but is in a thriving condition. On that body rests the fault,—that body so highly favoured by educational endowments and collegiate advantages, or, if we look in another direction, so carefully selected for personal piety and religious experience. Its members are accountable before God and man. This pest of society is the pet of their false teaching. The philosophers have shown it no quarter. They have in every way exploded the absurdity. Diagrams and demonstrations have put it to death. Still the divines uphold it. They raise the book, and proclaim its verbal infallibility. So long as they do that, witchcraft will follow in its train; it is the tail of the comet.

True it is that science reaches very many of the clergy. A superior character cannot fail to bring them under its influence. But how, generally speaking, do they aid its counteracting power against superstition? I am sorry to say that little is to be expected from them beyond neutrality. The fear of heresy is before their eyes, the din of orthodox anathema is in their ears. How came Dr. Hampden by a bishopric after his Bampton Lectures and those on Moral Philosophy? When the question occurs, I cannot forget his recantation sermon. Why sits Dr. Milman in his deanery? I cannot say; I only know that the first edition of his *History of the Jews* disposes in a less orthodox manner than does the second edition of certain patriarchal miracles. There is an equivoque to which enlightened divines have common recourse. They admit that science effectually disposes of witchcraft, miracles, &c., nowadays; but then they say that it was not so in sacred times. In reading the Bible, we walk by faith; in regarding the world around us, we walk by sight. Will this save their own consciences? But what is the consequence? Their hearers do not draw the same line; their intellects are too obtuse for so fine a distinction: they think that what has been, may be

again, and actually is again. If a well-educated preacher leaves them to infer literally that the devil went into the pigs, it does not surprise or shock them that—as happened in Essex—the pigs should climb up the cherry-tree and help themselves to the fruit. The enlightened clergy uphold the superstition by this distinction in favour of the wonders of old times, their less-informed hearers not perceiving the barrier between the two. And the more ignorant clergy, and others in "pretended holy orders," go the whole way in their enthusiasm, and teach accordingly. The results flow upon the children of the poorer classes in the nonsense of Sunday-school teaching. And thus we have Douster-swivels in Whitechapel, and self-dubbed Dr. Lillys in Essex. The stream cannot rise above the fountain. The clergy are neutral at best, superstitious at worst; and the literal teaching of marvels flows from them, through Sunday teachers, into thousands of schools, which are thus indoctrinated, unless saved by a smattering of science or a glimmering of common sense.

It seems a puzzle to some of our contemporaries that such notions are not confined to the poorer and more ignorant classes. They reach to Mayfair and Belgravia in London, and they are imbibed amongst the "upper ten thousand" in America. But neither our fashionables nor those of the model republic are deep in the physical sciences. They hear occasionally a celebrated lecturer in an institution; but he is not an expositor of the Bible. For that they go to their priest, clergyman, or pastor. He is the man to lecture on the miracles. He bids them reverence the laws of Moses; and if they take him for their guide in matrimony, why not as to witchcraft? He can illustrate how the devil goes out of one body and into another. Where, after that, is the strangeness of a spirit rapping a table? You do not convince disbelievers in demons by these means, nor sceptics in a future state—they give the profane version of fraud or fancy; but you gratify the godly. The literal preachers have gratified them already. Even in the lowest classes it is not the infidel who believes in the witch, or is taken in by the conjuror. Robert Owen is the solitary instance of a converted sceptic. He has been a singular man all his life, and retains the peculiarities, which some call insanity, to his present extreme

old age. Long may he stay in this world to enjoy in peace the society of visitants from the other, and continue to hold confidential communications with the late Dukes of Kent and Wellington! He is likely to remain a singular instance. Generally, in the faith of the preternatural by those of the more educated classes of society, as well as by those of the comparatively ignorant, the Bible is made the basis, and the clergy are the media. The Bible, I say, not as we read it in the light of reason, but as seen through the spectacles of orthodoxy, and vested with divine infallibility, even to all that the most orthodox Protestants in Germany—men such as Neander—have utterly abandoned.

There is little need to look further for a cause; here is one quite sufficient; unfortunately, it is likely to be so. Scientific teaching is continually counteracted; it is warned off sacred ground. Those who know better, hold their tongues; those who do not, babble away with might and main. The most effectual check would be for the scientific laity to demand a reform of the Church. Free the clergy from their forms, and let them speak out; give fair play to science and truth; let us have no idolatry of creeds, forms, or articles. The faith in witchcraft, conjuration, and all the rest of it, would not long survive that consummation in any class whatever.

October 3, 1858.

EDUCATION OF WOMAN.

Well has it been urged, that to make woman the meet companion of man, in the continuous intercourse of the married state, she must not be kept in utter ignorance of all about which her husband feels an interest. The reviewer is alarmed lest, when the husband goes home tired, his wife should talk to him about the price of stocks or the fall of cottons. "The deeper the man is drawn into the strife, the more important it is that the woman should stand outside it." Yes; and then the moral counsel, the timely retrenchment, that might have kept the man out of

the *Gazette*, and averted the bitter change from supposed opulence to narrow poverty, are effectually precluded; and the unprepared woman falls at once into the gulf, aggravating by her reproaches what she might have averted by her intelligent sympathies. The history is that of thousands of tradesmen and their families. Oh, but they are, we are told, to raise the man to their own moral level. And how? As to the industrial world, they are in blank ignorance; and as to the intellectual world, they are so restricted that the reviewer himself complains of "the young ladies" that "they say Ha! ha! like the horse in the book of Job, and go on dancing." For women to be interesting, they must be educated; and that not only in smatterings of French or music, but intellectually familiar —as has been suggested, to the great scandal of the reviewer —with the illustrious writers of our own language, the men whose genius has made it the world's glory. I should like to see the reviewer's proscribed book for ladies. He puts Chaucer and Dryden there for certain indecorums; why not Jeremy Taylor, Shakespeare, and the Bible?

Until Miss Nightingale marched with firm foot over the prejudice, her blessed works in Scutari would have been called most unfeminine and improper. They would have been held as bad as reading Dryden, or even George Sand. Success silences critics of this class. And the success which has attended benevolence is ready also to wait on industry and on learning. The reformation of society is slow work. Great hindrances will often be found where sympathy and help might have been expected; in such publications, for instance, of professed liberality as the *National Review*. But woman's allowed piety does not interfere with the "masculine career," and that piety has, let us hope, taught the moral lesson, that "God helps those that help themselves."

October 17, 1858.

THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

Now, if the Bible is to circumnavigate the globe, as the noble speaker anticipates, there are certain other things which are likely to go round along with it; and these should be taken into account. If the Bible go round the world, so will also the knowledge of Protestant trickery in relation to it. These pretenders to a pure word of God know that it is adulterated. They are aware of detected interpolations and mistranslations. They are fully up to the intermixture of human falsehood with divine truth. And yet they send them all over the Continent, because they are not sure that despotism would admit the volume if purified by their correction. They send them in all the regions of the East, because it has been agreed here only to pay the premium of 500*l.* for versions which correspond with the English.

If the Bible go round the world, science will go round with it, and every where confront its mistakes in astronomy, geology, and various other sciences. If the Bible go round the world, information must go with it of the thousand-and-one interpretations which are maintained by learned Christians wherever there is liberty of thought and speech. If the Bible go round the world, history will go with it, and tell of the bloody wars and persecutions among Christians, to which the late atrocities in India are a flea-bite, and its bloodshed only a very insignificant sanguinary little pool. If the Bible go round the world, the East must know the spiritual and civil condition of its European ministers and professors, through all their ranks, up to the imperial slave-dealer in men and the tiaraed kidnapper of children.

Nor is this all. The Bible must encounter books of impenetrable antiquity and of alleged divine origin. Its miracles will be met with the record of greater miracles; and while in front it will have to contend with a faith of ages, in rear it will be followed by the historical criticism of modern European times; and between the two fires it will have to hold its own,—which I deny not its power to do; I only ask that the expectations be reasonable, and that we make the reasonable allowances.

October 24, 1858.

CHURCH MONOPOLY.

But the Church cannot produce its divine patent of monopoly; and if Protestantism means any thing at all, it assuredly means the right of every individual to judge for himself and act accordingly.

This is a lesson which our Church does not inculcate, and which the vestrymen, who aim at its reformation, do not seem solicitous that it should teach. They shout execrations at auricular confession and Puseyism, but Low-Church monopoly and intolerance are quite as bad as High-Church monopoly and intolerance. They are alike utterly destructive of free thought, alike alien from Protestantism, and are a species of Popery only distinguishable in degree, and not in kind, from that which is exclusively called so, and which steals Jewish children in the name of the Lord.

Not only does our Church not inculcate this Christian and Protestant principle, but it teaches directly the contrary, and that not only from the pulpit, but in all the diversities of its social influence. It aims at making every Mechanics' Institute and popular library the temple of intolerance, the means of carrying on its warfare with free thought. Instances of this kind are continually occurring. Sometimes a censorship is vested in the clergyman; sometimes in a committee under his influence. Sometimes the exclusion goes by rule, and sometimes it overrules all rule. A case in point occurred not long ago at Halstead, in Essex. Mr. Courtauld—a name dear to all who prize religious liberty, for his great, continued, and successful efforts in the Braintree church-rate struggle—Mr. Courtauld presented to the library of the Halstead Mechanics' Institute, amongst a variety of other works, a volume by a very able writer, entitled *Harwood's Lectures on Strauss's Life of Jesus.* The volume is not an unacceptable one to many men of the working class; for some few years ago one of the publishers who may be ranked as of, and for, the working class, had a translation made of the original work on which that volume comments; and it was bought up chiefly by that class with the greatest eagerness; the sale rapidly augmenting to several thousand copies. The

work was, therefore, an appropriate one for a library frequented by that class,—one in which they had previously shown that they were strongly interested. And what happened? Why, that the vicar took the volume down from the shelves and put it in the fire. The servile witnesses endured the insult to their benefactor and to their own minds without remonstrance. The transaction was kept secret for two years, and then the shameful conduct of the vicar transpired. A general meeting replaced the book, and censured the incendiary. And then the question of censorship, even upon given books, came into discussion, and clerical influence prevailed: the shelves are declared not free.

November 7, 1858.

THE REFORMATION.

In reality the Reformation was an illustrious instance of human progress, and those most appropriately celebrate it who enter most heartily into the promotion of that progress in our own day. It is not celebrated, but mocked, by pretending that it settled all religious truths, forms, and practices for ever. It was one step in the road, not the goal. Since then, what lights have been thrown on a vast variety of religious subjects! Science has corrected even biblical legends. The principles and art of historical criticism have been carried on towards perfection, and triumphantly applied,—first to the correction of heathen, and since of Jewish, history. How much more is now known, both of mind and matter, than was known three centuries ago! In celebrating the Reformation, our churchmen should learn that we glorify, not a stationary, but a progressive principle; and to do that is worthy of our country and our nation.

November 21, 1858.

WORKING MEN AND PATRONAGE.

Would to heaven that the working men of Britain would learn from the record of Burns to discard the notions of patronage which still so unhappily infect them! How they still run after a lord to grace the annual meetings of their institutes and head their societies! Why, what did the patronage of the noblemen and gentlemen of Caledonia do for Burns? "They took him from the sickle and the plough to gauge ale-firkins!" And how was he treated then? In that dark page of English history—when Pitt and Toryism worked their wicked will, when the country was subject to a reign of terror which, except in some few brave souls, crushed all public spirit in the dust—some lick-spittle informer carries his dirty tittle-tattle to the Excise Commissioners; and though Burns was saved from disgraceful dismissal, for having heard or listened to some free-spoken ballad, yet the black mark was against his name, and to the day of his death he was not allowed that preferment in his vocation to which he was fairly entitled. Such was noble and governmental patronage to Burns. Out upon it, and upon those who yet go about bowing and cringing for its attainment! The ambitious of the working classes —and it is right enough that they should have the ambition of rising—have yet to learn that their best trust is in honest, persevering, and intelligent industry, and not in patronage. Burns would have been happier had he stuck to his farm, and left the excise, which brought him nothing but temptation and disappointment. I say, stuck to his farm; and that suggests another form of working-class ambition,—which is, to gain footing in the literary world, and a niche amongst the laurelled. If they deserve it, they will win it, and that while yet pursuing a career of honest industry. There is nothing in the pursuit of knowledge, in the cultivation of the faculties, nor even in the communication of thought to others, but what any one who sets about it in right earnest may attain, and yet pursue his humble vocation for the bread of the day. Only do not let him be in a hurry. The poems of Burns are almost all occasional. They are the facts which passed before his eyes, and the feelings and speculations thereon which arose in his mind.

At first he seems not to have had any notion of publishing; it was almost forced upon him by circumstances; and there is not a verse of his which he can be supposed to have sat down and penned because he wanted to show the world he was a poet. The spirit was in him, and he could not but sing; and let no one attempt to sing except under a similar afflatus. Sing at your work, but forego no work to follow the trade of singing. Carlyle has well enforced this, in a critique to which I have already referred in some slight tone of disparagement, but which will stand as the best and finest estimate of Burns, his genius, and his circumstances. Patronage dealt with him as is its wont to deal. It lauded him, and *fêted* him, and raised him to the pinnacle of glorification; and having thus gratified itself, and had its sight of the lion, it practically told him that he might go to the de'il if he liked, for whom he had already shown such orthodox compassion and sympathy. And shall we be told that this was the fault of a former age, and that we are much better nowadays? Nothing of the sort, sir. The bard still asks us for bread, and we still give him a stone, —but even that only after a long interval.

January 23, 1859.

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

The death of Daniel O'Connell leaves a blank in the world. It will not be filled up during this generation, perhaps not for many generations to come. No other man was so "well abused," or so enthusiastically praised; so loved, or so hated; so despised, or so venerated; so indiscriminately condemned, or so blindly followed. The grave closes over the "Big Beggarman" and the "Father of his Country." The *Times* has anointed his corpse with vinegar, and will empty no more vials of vituperation on his head; and *Punch* will no more "poke fun at him." The cap of Tara is a worthless gaud; at most, it can only surmount a coffin. The green banner may wrap him as a shroud. Ireland is semi-Saxonised by his decease. No other hand can uphold

the standard of Repeal. With all else it must become the flag of rebellion. His unparalleled power was strictly personal. It descended not to him, and descends not from him. On the best or the worst view of his character and course as a public man, there is the broad stamp of singularity. He had no coadjutors, properly so called. He had only helpers and agents. In his influence he ruled alone while he lived; and as he had no forerunner, he will have no successor. It was a fine spectacle, his personally acquired power over the minds of the Irish people. Probably it will appear yet grander when viewed more remotely in the perspective of history. The brawls of the last two years have deadened our sense of its completeness, perhaps they had impaired its reality; and, at all times, it must have been partially obscured to his English political contemporaries, pursuing their own party or patriotic objects. But never was supremacy more real, nor royalty ever so powerful. He was served with spontaneous allegiance, and in faith unquestioning. He could with one word have armed millions for desperate conflicts; he did more, —he kept them peaceful. The fights of factions even were suspended at his bidding. And only under his (practical) reign could Father Mathew have waged successful warfare against the stills. Cobbett once, in the House of Commons, called him "the Member for Ireland," and it was "no mistake." There and elsewhere he represented Ireland. Those who felt that "the world was not their friend, nor the world's law,"—whose first association with the idea of authority was that of resistance or evasion,—who were as aliens in their own country, and only saw a civilisation which made or kept them savages by treating them as savages,—learned from him the lessons of union, order, and hope. They hailed him wherever he came; their blessings followed his footsteps wherever he went; and they greeted the sympathising stranger with a "welcome to O'Connell's land." Talk of hero-worship! he had more of it than Cromwell, not less than Mirabeau; and he gained it by fairer means than either the one or the other. Ireland clasped his knees, and looked upwards from the dust.

Under his guidance Ireland became a British power. Its representatives were no longer to be found sleeping in

their collars, under the manger of the English minister. He could bring a great strength to a party, or appal it with a "great difficulty." His presence in the House was a trophy of his previous triumphs. That he was there was a record and a prestige of victory. Irish questions became the most exciting, though not the most important, of parliamentary topics. They made and unmade ministers; or if they did not unseat a premier, they upset his principles. Famine, which abolished the Corn Laws, baffled O'Connell. He could not grapple with the potato rot. Young Ireland was a thorn in his aged side. Repeal is where it will remain—in the clouds. But let the treatment of Irish questions in parliament of late years be compared with what it was before the Emancipation Act, and a mighty change will be perceived; a very different national position for Ireland, and a grand work to have been mainly achieved by the talent, energy, and skill of one man. He never returned from Westminster to Dublin but to be received with acclamations.

What was the spell of O'Connell upon the Irish heart?—the secret and the soul of his more than regality? What made him, through an unbroken period of forty years, the leader and the idol of a nation? This question still sorely puzzles our party and pygmy politicians. It is something out of the common beat, the House and hustings experience of Whiglings and Torylings. It is beyond or beside the philosophy of the gentlemen who "manage the press" for the one or the other interest. The solution is too tough a job for Jenkins. Some say it was all Irish "gullibility." Can they point to any other bubble that stood firm as a rock for forty years, and left a loving memory in the minds of millions? He had just the person and voice for a successful demagogue, say others. True, it was a majestic form; and it was surmounted—as he once told the multitude when his wig came off (in the words of Danton, at the guillotine, to the executioner)—by a head "worth looking at." But we have had many very personable politicians that failed of permanent popularity. Another explanation is, that it was "all along of his blarney." But eloquence alone is not a permanent power; nor is there any enduring influence in it, without other and higher principles of which it is the expression. O'Connell was a master of speaking

as an art. He could run through its gamut, from broadest humour to fiercest declamation. And when he spoke his best—which was not in the cold and ungenial atmosphere of the House of Commons, and seldom in England—there was a rich vein of lofty and poetic thought, which left impressions such as the word-grinding of the hack-speaker, the fury of the mere demagogue, or the cleverest management of claptraps, can never realise. Even his untiring energy; the faith in national liberality with which he forewent the profits of his profession to live on voluntary tribute, and braved the odium of such a cause to devote himself entirely to his country's interests; his certain readiness and forensic skill, and constant care and frequent triumphs;—even those might have failed, but for that great essential which in one word explains his character, his policy, and his power,—nationality. O'Connell was all over Irish, from his twinkling eye to the inmost core of his heart. He was the spirit of Ireland incarnate.

This was his fascination; this was his existence, physical, intellectual, and moral. In this he "lived, moved, and had his being." Ireland was his love, his delight, and his glory. A page in her annals was his highest conception of fame. When the disappointments that so speedily followed the Reform Bill alienated the Radicals and left Whiggery in the slough of finality, he might have headed the movement party in Great Britain, and so have led the Liberals of all Europe. But he chose to be Irish rather than European. The Rotunda was his temple, and Conciliation Hall his Walhalla. For abstract principles of political right he had no reverence. They commanded none of his mental allegiance. Let an Irish interest come into collision with them, and, as he once broadly avowed, he made them his bow, and gave them the go-by. Of political economy he had very indistinct notions. "What would this do for Ireland?" would be his inquiry at the end of any chapter of any book of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. He was for political economy, provided political economy was for Ireland; and if not, not. All friendships and enmities, praise and blame, coöperation and hostility, and even truth and falsehood, followed the same rule. It was his universal standard; hence his offensive untruth to so many parties and principles. Now he was helping to

draw the Charter, and now consigning Chartists to the lowest depths of infamy. Hence the Whigs oscillated from canonised saints to a "base, brutal, and bloody" faction. The breeze bore love or hatred to his soul, according as the compass showed it was fair or foul for Ireland. I have seen him jealous of Scotch mountains and "romantic" Edinburgh, on behalf of the Hill of Howth and the grandeur of Dublin. He doted on every stick and stone of Ould Ireland. The "Emerald Isle" was more to him than all the "Islands of the Blessed." And the bowers of Eden, or diamonds of Golconda, were poor "to the first flower of the earth, and first gem of the sea." From this true feeling it was that his false words so often flowed. As an ambassador is "sent abroad to lie for the good of his country," so, in O'Connell's ethics, "a patriot should lie at home for the good of his country." What his *amor patriæ* prompted, it vindicated to his own conscience, or the annual fortnight's penance at Derrynane rubbed off the score. To the Catholic faith he was devoutly true. It came into no collision with Irish objects. It is the only faith that has not wasted Ireland with oppressions, proscriptions, confiscations, and massacres. To all things else he was ever ready to be faithless, "if need be,"—the need of Ireland. He was most sincere and intense in his patriotism; it knew no bounds; he was an unprincipled patriot.

Now, although this nationality be a much grander thing than the mere red-tapeism and office-routine that pass for statesmanship; although it is in fact a reflex, and a refined one too, of the John-Bullism that grumbled at O'Connell as it would at a French cook,—yet is it comparatively low as a principle and limited as an influence. Independent nationality is not on the cards for Ireland. It is a geographical impossibility. Her destiny is subjugation or federalisation. And to be federalised, not indeed by a separate legislature, but by the retention—while possessing all the benefits of imperial unity—of so much distinctness of being as shall recognise peculiarities of race, manners, and religion, as shall provide for the rights and the wants engendered by diversity of circumstance and history, and as shall allow her to weave her own crown of rejoicing in prosperity, and in calamity to "wear her rue with a difference." This Ireland may possess, and the path becomes clearer for her

attainment of it. And here—since sundry critics have taken to talk of Providence and missions in relation to the life and death of O'Connell—I will say that perhaps his mission was to lead Ireland onward from the degradation of a conquered state towards the dignity of a federalised people, by embodying in himself and evoking in the millions the spirit of nationality. This is done. Whatever her remaining wrongs or her heavy sufferings, Ireland is evidently on the way to a full equality and fraternal union with Great Britain. And she has been put onward by a man and by means as evidently fitted for that work as they were evidently not fitted for the higher work to be yet achieved, of the renovation of society in both countries.

Peace, then, to the memory of an illustrious man, who did the work of his day and people. He is no model, but he was needful. The permanent worth of what he did will appear clearer hereafter. The unscrupulousness of his means will be more consistently condemned when party morals have grown purer. And if a more distinctly marked and tangible success be required to impress on the reader's mind the fact of success, I point to Catholic Emancipation. There O'Connell triumphed, after all the Liberalism of the Imperial Parliament, and all the genius that adorned it, had failed for thirty years. He triumphed over the fiercest prejudices, and the oldest interests, and the bigotry of organised millions of religionists. He triumphed over parliamentary majorities, and the Peel administration, and the Iron Duke himself, making them become the agents of their own and their party's discomfiture. By peaceful means, and not in tented field, but in the arena of his own commonly unyielding mind, did O'Connell conquer the conqueror of Napoleon.

May 30, 1847.

END OF VOL. V.

LEVEY AND CO., PRINTERS, GREAT NEW STREET, FETTER LANE, E.C.

BINDING SECT. FEB 6 1981

35

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

BX
9815
F7
v.5

Fox, William Johnson
Collected Works Memorial
Edition

UTL AT DOWNSVIEW
D RANGE BAY SHLF POS ITEM C
39 16 12 24 06 004 1